

Medicaid Work Requirements:

Five Ways Mental Health Counselors Can Support Clients

Why It Matters

Beginning in 2026, many Medicaid expansion enrollees will need to document at least 80 hours per month of work, education, training, community service, or other qualifying activities to maintain coverage. For clients with mental health or substance use conditions, administrative barriers may create challenges despite qualifying for coverage or exemptions.

1. *Start the Conversation*

Ask clients:

- Do you have Medicaid coverage?
- Have you received notices from Medicaid?
- Do you know if your state has implemented work requirements?



2. *Help Clients Stay Organized*

Encourage clients to:

- keep copies of paperwork and notices.
- save pay stubs or activity records.
- track reporting deadlines.
- update contact information with Medicaid.



Many coverage losses occur because paperwork is missed, not because someone is ineligible.

3. *Know the Exemptions*

Counselors can:

- learn state-specific exemption criteria.
- identify clients who may need additional support.
- connect clients with eligibility specialists.



Some individuals may qualify for exemptions, including those with certain mental health or substance use conditions.

4. *Document When Appropriate*



Counselors may be asked to:

- verify treatment participation.
- describe functional limitations.
- complete forms supporting exemption requests.

It's important to understand your state's requirements and your organization's policies.

5. *Connect Clients to Resources*



Keep referral information readily available for:

- Medicaid navigators.
- legal aid organizations.
- workforce development programs.
- community assistance agencies.

Strong referral networks can help clients maintain coverage and access to care.

Key Takeaway

Stable health coverage supports recovery, treatment adherence, and employment. By helping clients understand requirements, stay organized, and access available supports, Mental Health Counselors can play an important role in preventing avoidable coverage disruptions.

Medicaid Resources for Counselors

- [State Medicaid Agency Directory](#)
- [Medicaid.gov](https://www.medicaid.gov)