

ProviderAlert

To: Select Health Providers

Date: February 20, 2026

Subject: Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF) Search Process Reminder

Summary: This alert is to clarify the process and responsibilities related to PRTF searches for Select Health of South Carolina (SHSC) members.

- The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) has designated South Carolina Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) as responsible for conducting PRTF searches. In response, Select Health has established a dedicated PRTF Search Care Management (CM) Team to support families and providers through the referral and admission process. As a reminder, according to the [SCDHHS Psychiatric Hospital Services Manual](#) (p. 8), PRTFs shall be regarded as a treatment level in a larger continuum of care and not as residential place.

Key Process Requirements:

- **Medical Necessity Determination Required**
Before a PRTF referral can be submitted to a PRTF, the referring provider must obtain a Prior Authorization (PA) through Select Health Behavioral Health Utilization Management (BH UM). The PA must include Diagnostic Assessment (DA), Certificate of Need (CON) as well as any other information pertinent to determining medical necessity criteria (MNC) for PRTF level of care. The Individual Education Plan (IEP), psychological testing and IQ testing **are not required to be sent** for the PRTF prior authorization. However, if the member meets MNC and the information is available, providing it will streamline the PRTF Search CMs ability to send the referral timely. This eliminates the additional step of the PRTF Search CM requesting this information from the parent/guardian, treating providers and other state agencies involved.
- **Fax PRTF referrals to Select Health Behavioral Health UM: 1-888-796-5521**
Behavioral Health UM determines medical necessity for PRTF level of care. Without medical necessity being established and PRTF level of care approved by BH UM, the PRTF Search CM Team cannot begin the PRTF search process. Medical necessity is reviewed at a regular cadence throughout the PRTF admission. Contact Behavioral Health UM at 1-866-341-8765 for questions.

Initiation of PRTF Search and Process

- Once medical necessity is established and PRTF level of care is approved, a PRTF Search CM is assigned to the member.
- The PRTF Search CM is responsible for sending all referrals and engaging in additional communication regarding the referral to all PRTF facilities. The PRTF Search CM communicates with the parent/guardian, treating providers and other state agencies involved to obtain additional clinical documentation needed for the PRTF search.

- The PRTF Search CM also provides updates on the search process to the parent/guardian and notifies the parent/guardian when a PRTF has offered admission.

Referring Provider Responsibilities

- Referring providers must submit a PA request timely when PRTF level of care is clinically indicated.
- It is the referring provider's responsibility to participate in the initial PA phone call with BH UM.
- Prompt submission ensures:
 - Families can access support in this process as early as possible.
 - The search process remains on track and avoids unnecessary delays by having the PRTF Search CM Team as lead.

Treating Provider (PRTF) Responsibility

- It is the treating provider's responsibility to participate in each continued stay authorization phone call with BH UM.

Role of the PRTF Search Care Manager

The assigned PRTF Search CM works closely with:

- The parent/guardian
- Providers, and
- Any involved state agencies to gather additional information required for facility referrals.
- The PRTF Search CM also provides ongoing updates to the parent/guardian until the member is accepted by a PRTF.

Questions?

Select Health Behavioral Health UM – BH

BH UM Phone: 1-866-341-8765

BH UM Fax: 1-888-796-5521