

# Prior authorization requirements for North Carolina Medicaid

## Changes to prior authorization requirements for North Carolina Medicaid

As of Oct. 1, 2025, as approved by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) we will resume prior authorization for some services. This includes peer support, partial hospitalization and substance abuse comprehensive outpatient treatment (SACOT).

### General information

This list contains prior authorization requirements for behavioral health services for participating UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of North Carolina health care professionals providing inpatient and outpatient services. United Behavioral Health, operating under the brand name Optum, manages these behavioral health services.

Please submit your prior authorization requests in one of the following ways.

- **Online for outpatient services:** Use the **Community Based Behavioral Outpatient Services Request Form** on Provider Express
- **Online for research-based behavioral therapy:** Use the **Applied Behavior Analysis Treatment Request Form**
- **By phone for acute levels of care**, including North Carolina alcohol and drug abuse treatment centers (ADATC), partial hospitalizations and inpatient: Call **800-638-3302**, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday

To learn more about covered behavioral health services, go to [providerexpress.com](https://providerexpress.com).

Prior authorization is not required for emergency or urgent care. Out-of-network physicians, facilities and other health care professionals must request prior authorization for all procedures and services. All requests for Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) services also require review for prior authorization.

| Procedures and services   | Additional information  | CPT® or HCPCS codes and/or how to obtain prior authorization        |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Research-based behavioral health therapy (RB-BHT)</b>          | Prior authorization required                                  | 97151, 97152, 97153, 97154, 97155, 97156, 97157                     |
| <b>Inpatient – mental health/ substance use disorder</b>          | Prior authorization required within 72 hours                  | Use appropriate inpatient revenue codes based on admission/bed type |
| <b>Inpatient – in IMD facilities for ages 21–64</b>               | Prior authorization required                                  | Revenue code 160  |
| <b>Partial hospitalization for mental health</b>                  | Prior authorization required                                  | H0035   |
| <b>Substance abuse comprehensive outpatient treatment (SACOT)</b> | 30-day pass-through period, then prior authorization required | H2035   |
| <b>Peer support</b>   | 24-unit pass through, then prior authorization required       | H0038, H0038 HQ   |

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