

INFORMATIONAL NOTICE

TO: Participating Advanced Practice Nurses, Community Mental Health Providers, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Rural Health Clinics (RHCs), Encounter Rate Clinics (ERCs), Hospitals, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Local Health Departments, School Based/Linked Health Centers, and Physicians

RE: Illinois DocAssist

The purpose of this notice is to alert you to the implementation of **a new statewide child and adolescent behavioral health consultation service for primary care providers (PCPs) and clinicians, called Illinois DocAssist**. The Illinois DocAssist consultation service was effective starting September 8, 2008.

To contact Illinois DocAssist, call 1-866-986-ASST (2778). The Illinois DocAssist consultation service is available at no cost to PCPs and clinicians serving HFS enrolled children under 21 years of age. Illinois DocAssist is available Monday through Friday, 9:00AM to 5:00 PM, except holidays.

Illinois DocAssist is designed to assist PCPs and clinicians in their assessment and treatment of children and youth with mental health or substance use problems. Illinois DocAssist staff (child and adolescent psychiatrists and other behavioral health clinicians) will offer the following:

- Problem-based consultations to guide the mental health and substance use assessment of children and youth, and provide evidence-based treatment options including medication management strategies.
- Education and technical assistance via Web-based clinical resources, office-based training workshops including access to, and training on, the use of screening tools and diagnostic aids, stepped-care algorithms to guide clinical decisions including when to treat and when to refer, training to PCPs, clinicians and clinic staff on ways to improve the integration of mental health and substance use assessment and treatment into the clinic routine.
- Referral services to identify local community referral options for youngsters that cannot be managed in a primary care setting.

Illinois DocAssist, a collaborative program of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services; the Department of Human Services/Division of Mental Health; the University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Psychiatry and the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, seeks to meet the need for early and effective behavioral health intervention for children and youth. Given the well-documented shortage of child and adolescent psychiatrists in the United States, it is not surprising that 75% of youth with psychiatric disorders are seen in primary care settings, and about half of all pediatric office visits involve behavioral, psychosocial, and/or educational concerns. PCPs have requested, and can benefit from, support by child psychiatrists as they diagnose and treat children and youth with mental health and substance use symptoms and illnesses.

The goals of Illinois DocAssist are to:

- Improve the screening, diagnosis, and prompt initiation of treatment for psychiatric and substance use symptoms, and disorders in children and youth in primary care settings.
- Improve the integration of mental health and substance use care with primary medical care.
- Enhance the quality of pharmacotherapy for psychiatric disorders prescribed by primary care physicians.

HFS strongly encourages all primary care providers and other clinicians to take advantage of Illinois DocAssist.

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