



**Mississippi Department of Mental Health**  
**Provider Bulletin**  
**Number PR0082**

**Subject: CARA Referral Process  
Providers of Substance Use Disorder  
Services**

**Issue Date:** January 22, 2019

**Effective Date:** March 1, 2019

**Scope**

All DMH Certified Providers of Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services

**Purpose**

Inform all DMH Certified Providers of Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services of a partnership between the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (CPS) and the Mississippi Department of Mental Health Services (DMH).

In response to a federal mandate, Title I of CAPTA; Public Law 114-198, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA Act), CPS and DMH have established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU serves to ensure referrals of infants and their families identified as being affected by substance use/abuse, withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, receive appropriate services in an effort to extend continuity of care.

**Background**

DMH certified providers of Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services are required by the Operational Standards (49.1.C.) to assist with appropriate referrals and placement.

In 2003, CAPTA included a state plan requirement that the Governor of each state provide an assurance that the state has policies and procedures to address the needs of substance-exposed infants, including requirements to make appropriate referrals to child protective services (CPS) and other appropriate services, and a requirement to develop a plan of safe care for the affected infants. As originally incorporated in sections 106(b)(2)(B)(ii) and (iii) of CAPTA<sup>1</sup>, the provisions required states to have policies and procedures relating to “infants born and identified as being affected by *illegal* [emphasis added] substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure.” In 2010, the provision was amended by Congress to also include infants affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

On July 22, 2016, the President signed into law CARA which, among other provisions, amended sections 106(b)(2)(B)(ii) and (iii) of CAPTA to remove the term “illegal” as applied to substance abuse affecting infants and to specifically require that plans of safe care address the needs of **both infants and their families or caretakers**. CARA also added requirements relating to **data collection and monitoring** (see further explanation can be found in the Subject section of this notice).

## **Subject**

All DMH certified providers must ensure that substance-exposed infants and their caretakers are engaged and provided access to treatment within two business days of the receipt of the referral.

Beginning March 1, 2019, all CARA referrals sent to a DMH certified provider for substance use treatment services via the CPS Smartsheet Data system must be engaged within three (3) days of receipt and abide by the following:

- Using a HIPPA-secured email system, establish an electronic email account where electronic referrals can be received by one (1) centralized contact person (CARA Designee) within the agency. A back-up staff member must be identified also.
- Contact and engage the postpartum woman/family within three (3) business days of receipt of the electronic referral sent within CPS's Smartsheet Data system.
- Input feedback comments of the engagement encounters directly into CPS's Smartsheet Data system.
- Determine the appropriate level of care for the caregiver and/or child needs (if appropriate).
- If assessment and admission is appropriate, input an update directly into CPS's Smartsheet Data system.
- Participate in CPS's quarterly CARA conference calls.
- Data Collection & Monitoring:
  - Keep record of all referrals, financial records, supporting documents, and other records pertinent to the services performed to the CARA mother/father and/or family members.
  - Keep record of the number of CARA referrals received, the number of individuals actually receiving services, number of referrals unable to contact (i.e. wrong number), number denied/declined services, number pending enrollment, and number of "no shows for quarterly reports to CPS.

Further information concerning this notice will be integrated into the next revision to the DMH Operational Standards Manual.

Should you have any questions, please contact the DMH CARA Coordinator at 601-359-1288.

***End of Provider Bulletin***