

Considerations for SMI Evaluation Referrals (Jail, Probation, Mental Health Court Referrals)

CRN is committed to making well-informed, accurate, and timely SMI Determinations, maintaining fidelity of SMI criteria, and with collaborating with providers to make this process as transparent as possible. The points below are designed to assist you in making appropriate referrals for an SMI evaluation and to provide guidance on what information is especially relevant when an evaluation is being reviewed for determination.

In order to be determined eligible for SMI benefits, the criteria, as defined by AZ DBHS, must be clearly documented.

Please consider the below checklist when deciding whether to refer someone for an SMI evaluation:

- Does the individual have a current SMI qualifying diagnosis on record AND does the record support the diagnosis by clear description of corresponding symptoms (symptom type, onset, duration, and frequency), behaviors consistent with the diagnosis, and clinical observations consistent with the diagnosis?
- Does the individual have, documented in the record, severe functional impairment that is directly linked to the SMI qualifying diagnosis AND has that functional impairment been occurring for at least the past 12 months or 6 months with an expected continue duration of another 6 months?
- In addition to the above, is it clear that the symptoms and functional impairment are not primarily due to substance abuse/dependence, medical conditions (i.e. chronic pain, brain injury, seizure disorder, thyroid condition, etc), developmental disability, antisocial personality traits or disorder, incarceration or criminal status, situational stressors, or other diagnoses or factors? If any of those factors are present, is there documentation to show that they have been ruled out as the primary reason for their impairment?
- If there is a history of (or current/recent) substance abuse, is there is evidence of periods of sustained sobriety and persistence of symptoms and functional impairment during those periods?
- Does the individual have a history of outpatient mental health treatment not while incarcerated? History of suicide attempts and psychiatric hospitalizations? What has been effective for managing their symptoms?
- Is there a history of mental illness in the family; have family members been treated for mental illness, committed suicide, etc?

Once you have determined that a referral is appropriate, we highly encourage you to provide the evaluator with all behavioral health records that you can obtain (from current or previous providers), including psychiatric assessments and progress notes, other clinical or counseling notes, psychological/psychometric testing, medication list, and other documents that would support the above points.

We are here to help in this process; please contact us if you have any questions and/or need technical assistance.