
Category: **DIRECTLY OPERATED PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**
Title: **CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE/ TRAVEL**

Prior Approval Date: 09/06/2002
Current Approval Date: 08/27/2014

Approved by: _____ *08/27/14*
Executive Director
Approved by: *Albert R. Perry*
Office of the County Executive

I. ABSTRACT

It is the practice of the Macomb County Community Mental Health Board of Directors (MCCMH Board) to establish standards and procedures regarding conference/training attendance.

II. APPLICATION

This policy shall apply to all administrative employees and directly-operated network provider employees of Macomb County Community Mental Health (MCCMH).

III. POLICY

Conference/training attendance provides for the maintenance and improvement of the quality and quantity of mental health services delivered to Macomb County consumers by employees. It is the policy of the MCCMH Board to provide an annual allocation for conference attendance reimbursement to MCCMH administrative employees and directly-operated network provider employees.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Administratively-Initiated Conference/ Training Attendance Request
Requests for conference attendance or training initiated by the MCCMH Executive Director, Deputy Director, or a MCCMH Division Director /designee.
- B. Conference
Any seminar, convention, conference, or other training session in which the substantive content is work-related and is primarily for the advancement of skills and/or knowledge of the employee in his/her assigned program or administrative position.
- C. Release Time
Time administratively authorized by the employee's immediate supervisor which is spent away from the employee's assigned work responsibilities to attend MCCMH approved conferences or trainings without loss of pay and without charge to any of the approved leave categories in the Macomb County Personnel Handbook. Release time is considered work time and is counted when computing overtime.
- D. MCCMH Program
MCCMH directly operated network provider.
- E. Employee Initiated Conference/ Training Attendance Request
Requests for conference or training attendance initiated by the employee.
- F. Program-Initiated Conference/ Training Attendance Request
Requests for conference or training attendance initiated at the program level.
- G. Employee or Staff
The full and part-time employees and independent contractors of the MCCMH Board.
- H. Training
MCCMH sponsored educational activity in which the substantive content is work-related and is primarily for the advancement of skills and/or knowledge of the employee/independent contractor in his/her assigned program or administrative position.

V. STANDARDS

- A. Reimbursement Policies and Rates
The most current conference attendance/reimbursement policies and rates established by Macomb County shall be in effect.
- B. Conference Attendance Allocation
The conference attendance allocation shall include:
 - 1. Funding allocated by the MCCMH Executive Director, Deputy Director, or a MCCMH

Division Director/designee to support administratively-initiated conference costs.

2. Funding allocated by each of the MCCMH Board's programs to support program-initiated conference costs.
3. Funding allocated by all other sources, including grants, to support conference costs not included in V.B.1 or 2.

C. Annual Maximum

An employee may be approved by their supervisor for an annual maximum of 37.5 hours release time for the purpose of administratively or program-initiated conference attendance. This does not include attendance at the mandatory and supplemental educational/training programs sponsored by MCCMH pursuant to MCCMH MCO Policy 10-007, "Training and Development." Exceptions to this limitation may be approved by the MCCMH Executive Director, Deputy Director, or appropriate Division Director.

D. Reimbursement Approval

Reimbursement for conference attendance will be approved for MCCMH staff only when specific authorization is granted, in advance, by the MCCMH Executive Director, Deputy Director, or appropriate Division Director.

E. Out-of-State Travel

Requests for reimbursement of all expenses for out-of-state travel require prior authorization from the MCCMH Board.

F. Air Travel

Requests for reimbursement of air travel expenses shall not exceed the cost of a coach fare and requires prior authorization from the MCCMH Board.

G. Maximum Allowance

The maximum reimbursable allowance for food expenses shall not exceed the maximum authorized by the County. Alcoholic beverages and gratuities are not reimbursable.

H. Validated Receipts Required

Requests for reimbursement of approved conference attendance expenses shall not be approved without **itemized**, validated receipts for all such expenses.

VI. PROCEDURES

A. EMPLOYEE INITIATED CONFERENCE REQUEST

1. The employee shall submit the "Request for Approval to Attend Conference" form, (Exhibit A), to his/her direct supervisor, as appropriate, for review and approval or denial of release time. Release time may be approved provided the conference relates to the employee's current responsibilities at MCCMH, if staffing levels permit.

2. The conference attendance request shall be signed by the supervisor and sent to the Division Director for final approval. However, all requests may be subject to the approval of the MCCMH Executive Director or Deputy Director.
3. Employee shall forward conference attendance documentation (Certificate of Completion attached to Request for Approval to Attend Conference form) to employee's direct supervisor who shall place it in the on-site employee supervisory file. A copy shall be forwarded to the training department for recording.

B. PROGRAM INITIATED CONFERENCE REQUEST

1. Requests initiated at the program level shall be reviewed and approved or denied by the Program Supervisor.
2. The employee shall submit the Request for Approval to Attend Conference form (Exhibit A) to his/her direct supervisor, as appropriate, for release time and related expenses. Release time and expenses may be approved provided that employee attendance at the conference is mandatory for program fidelity, if staffing levels permit.
3. Conference attendance requests which are approved shall be signed by the supervisor and sent to the Division Director for final approval.
4. The Division Director shall submit the conference attendance request form and all supporting documentation applicable for payment processing to the Finance Division for payment.
5. The Finance Division shall return an authorized, signed copy of the Request for Approval to Attend Conference form to the employee for attachment to the appropriate Conference Mileage Report (Exhibit B) following conference attendance.
6. To obtain prepaid conference attendance expenses, the employee shall submit to the Finance Division the original approved request form packet at least three weeks prior to the date prepayment is due.
7. Following conference attendance, employees shall submit requests for reimbursement on the appropriate Conference Mileage Report (Exhibit B). A copy of the previously approved attendance request form and **itemized**, validated receipts for all expenses for which reimbursement is being requested shall be submitted with this report.
8. All requests for reimbursement of mileage must include written mileage documentation using an accurate mileage calculator (i.e. Mapquest). The mileage calculation must include travel originating and/or ending at the employee's main place of employment. According to the IRS, mileage traveled between an employee's home and an employee's main place of employment is considered personal commuting expenses and are not reimbursable business expenses.

9. The Finance Division shall process the reimbursement for approved expenses according to current accounting procedures.
10. Upon return of conference attendance documentation (Certificate of Completion attached to Request for Approval to Attend Conference form) to the employee, he/she shall forward the documentation to the employee's direct supervisor who shall place it in the on-site employee supervisory file. A copy shall be forwarded to the training department for recording.

C. MCCMH ADMINISTRATION INITIATED CONFERENCE/ TRAINING REQUEST

1. Requests for employee conference/ training attendance or training that are initiated by MCCMH Division Director or designee shall be reviewed and approved or denied by the Executive Director or designee.
2. The employee shall submit the Request for Approval to Attend Conference form (Exhibit A), to his/her direct supervisor, as appropriate, for release time and related expenses. Release time and/ or expenses may be approved provided that employee attendance at the conference/ training is mandatory for program fidelity, if staffing levels permit.
3. Conference attendance requests which are approved shall be signed by the Division Director and sent to the Executive Director or designee for final approval or denial.
4. The Division Director shall submit the conference attendance request form packet to the Finance Division for payment.
5. The Finance Division shall return an authorized, signed copy of the Request for Approval to Attend Conference form to the employee for attachment to the Conference Mileage Report (Exhibit B) following conference attendance.
6. To obtain prepaid conference attendance expenses, the employee shall submit to the Finance Division the original approved request form at least three weeks prior to the date prepayment is due.
7. Following conference attendance, employees shall submit requests for reimbursement on the Macomb County Conference Mileage Report (Exhibit B). A copy of the previously approved attendance request form and **itemized**, validated receipts for all expenses for which reimbursement is being requested shall be submitted with this report.
8. All requests for reimbursement of mileage must include written mileage documentation using an accurate mileage calculator (i.e. Mapquest). The mileage calculation must include travel originating and/or ending at the employee's main place of employment. According to the IRS, mileage traveled between an employee's home and an employee's main place of employment is considered personal commuting expenses and are not reimbursable business expenses.

9. The Finance Division shall process the reimbursement for approved expenses according to current accounting procedures.
10. Upon return of conference attendance documentation (Certificate of Completion attached to Request for Approval to Attend Conference form) to the employee, he/she shall forward the documentation to the employee's direct supervisor who shall place it in the on-site employee supervisory file. A copy shall be forwarded to the training department for recording.

VII. REFERENCES/ LEGAL AUTHORITY

- A. MCCMH MCO Policy 10-001, Exhibit A, Macomb County Personnel Manual, § 2.7, Mileage Reimbursement

VIII. EXHIBITS

- A. Request for Approval to Attend Conference Form
- B. Macomb County Conference Mileage Report