



OFFICE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE
AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Mystery Shopper Protocol

Purpose: This protocol provides a framework for conducting mystery shopper calls to substance abuse treatment providers receiving Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (Block Grant) funds. The Mystery Shopper initiative is intended to gauge how informed employees are regarding Block Grant requirements as they relate to individuals needing priority admission. It is also intended to ensure that accurate information is provided. Additionally, mystery shopper calls will assist in identifying training needs to improve customer service, knowledge and access to services. The information listed below provides the standardized approach to implementing this initiative.

The Department of Children and Families' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH) will gauge provider knowledge related to:

- Access to care standards
 - Timely access to services
 - Geographic access to services
 - Following Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant requirements for priority populations, including pregnant women and intravenous drug users
 - Capacity to schedule immediate appointments
 - Provision of interim services
 - Available services for clients
- Customer service and quality standards
 - Promoting family and personal self determination
 - Professionalism
 - Responsiveness
 - Responses to questions related to family and guardian issues
 - Cultural competency

Definitions: As used in this protocol, the following terms mean:

- **Mystery shopper:** SAMH staff member identified to represent him/her self as an individual or family member seeking services.
- **Interim Services:** Services that are provided until an individual is admitted to a substance abuse treatment program. The purposes of the services are to reduce the adverse health effects of such abuse, promote the health of the individual, and reduce the risk of transmission of disease. At a minimum, interim services include counseling and education about HIV and tuberculosis (TB), about the risks of needle-sharing, the risks of transmission to sexual partners and infants, and about steps that can be taken to ensure that HIV and TB transmission does not occur, as well as referral for HIV or TB treatment services if necessary. For pregnant women, interim services also include counseling on the effects of alcohol and drug use on the fetus, as well as referral for prenatal care.

Methodology: The mystery shopper calls will be completed using at minimum a two person team. One person will serve as the caller to interact with the selected provider while the second person will take notes and complete the Mystery Shopper Performance Card (see **Appendix A**).

To ensure consistency, SAMH has set the following critical areas as focus points for the calls. Each call will be evaluated based on the following:

Table 1: Critical Areas

Focus Areas	Provider Expectation
Professionalism	Courteous, informative, and clear
Client-directed	Caller allowed to guide decisions
Accurate	The information provided was complete and correct
Pertinent	The information provided was the best option(s) for the need described by the caller
Safety	No risk of harm, information was appropriate
Service Set Up	Timeliness to service appointment

Call Preparation: Since mystery shopper calls will be completed with providers across the state, the mystery shopper team will utilize an unrecognized number to conceal where they are calling from. While providers will be aware that mystery shopper calls are taking place, it is important that these calls are not easily identified.

To guide the calls, a number of scenarios have been developed around the state's target populations including pregnant women and intravenous drug users. Prior to each call, the team will identify which scenario will be utilized and capture this information on the Mystery Shopper Performance Card.

Interaction During Call: During each call, the mystery shopper will:

1. Introduce him/herself,
2. Provide context around their needs,
3. Remain courteous (the call is not intended to antagonize),
4. Inquire about available service options to address needs identified, and
5. Inquire about how to obtain services.

Documentation: During each call, the notetaker will:

1. Document the overall interaction, including the provider's:
 - Temperament and tone of voice,
 - Willingness to assist,
 - Ability to answer the caller's questions, and
 - Active listening skills
2. Complete the Mystery Shopper Performance Card (see **Appendix A**)
 - Each focus area is operationalized through 3 questions
 - Tally the responses to complete the summary rating report
 - Identify areas of strengths and areas for improvements

Follow-up: The mystery shopper call team will compile the findings from the calls monthly and present this information to the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. If there are any major health or safety concerns during the call, SAMH will contact the appropriate Managing Entity (ME) within two (2) hours of the initial call. Additionally, each ME will receive a quarterly summary of the findings for their participating providers.

Call Frequency: A minimum of six (6) mystery shopper calls per month will be made so that we may reach every county within the state. Providers will be selected through a randomized selection process, based on their county, and will be tracked by the mystery shopper team to ensure locations are not contacted multiple times within the fiscal year.

Appendix A:

Mystery Shopper Performance Card

Section I:

The following section provides call participant details.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Agency Information:

Agency Name: _____

Tel.: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

SAMH Region: _____

ME: _____

County: _____

Employee Name(s): _____

Website (choose all that apply):

- Website publicized Block Grant admission preferences
- Programs and services identified
- Functioning links
- Valid contact information

SAMH Team:

Caller: _____

Evaluator: _____

Scenario Description:

If caller indicated they were a non-English speaker or needed TTA/TTY services, were accommodations made?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Section II:

The following section is the guiding worksheet for the mystery shopper calls. Please indicate whether the listed statements applied to the call completed. If **at least** one of the statements listed within a category did not apply to the mystery shopper call completed, then the entire category will be coded as **NO**.

MYSTERY SHOPPER PERFORMANCE CARD		Applies
Professional	The employee was courteous.	
	The employee supplied his/her name.	
	The employee spoke clearly and professionally.	
		YES or NO
Client-Directed	The employee attempted to engage the caller.	
	The employee did not try to redirect or change the caller's choice.	
	The employee did not dismiss the caller's choice.	
		YES or NO
Accurate	The employee asked questions to determine the caller's needs.	
	The employee provided information that was true.	
	The employee answered the questions posed correctly.	
		YES or NO
Pertinent	The information provided was relevant to the treatment the caller was seeking.	
	The employee provided information on services within the caller's geographic region.	
	The employee discussed all possible options available, even treatment options available through other providers.	
		YES or NO
Safety	The employee stayed within their scope of work.	
	The employee provided options before the call ended.	
	The options provided avoided potential health and safety risks to the caller.	
		YES or NO
Service Set -Up	If services were scheduled, the initial appointment was set for within 24/48/72 hours. (select appropriate timeframe for call)	
	If space was not available, the employee placed the caller on a waitlist.	
	If space was not available, the employee provided options for interim services.	
		YES or NO

Section III:

The following section is a summary report of the interaction and information provided on the call. To complete, indicate whether each category received a Yes or No based on the Mystery Shopper Performance Card (from Section II).

	Yes	No
Professional		
Client-Directed		
Accurate		
Pertinent		
Safety		
Service Set- Up		

Recommendations for Improvements:
