**TSHA SHARS QUESTION AND ANSWER DOCUMENT**

**May 2022**

In response to questions submitted to TSHA and the HHSC regarding the new SHARS rules, the following answers have been developed:

**Q.** What does the referral look like? Would I need a general written document from another provider with an NPI number saying for example, “this student needs comprehensive audiological evaluations and hearing aid checks” or is the referral one of the recommendations that doctors typically include at the bottom of their reports?

**A.** According to the SHARS Policy Handbook (Pag 21), the evaluation can serve as the referral. TEA has provided a form for referral that some districts are attaching to the evaluation.

**Q**. What exactly constitutes a referral for speech therapy? Can a statement of need in the evaluation by the SLP suffice?

**A.** TEA has recommended a referral form. (See below)

**Q.** Will a Speech Pathologist with an NPI number need to have a separate document to serve as the referral vs. the evaluation?

**A.** TEA has recommended a referral form.

**Q.** If a provider writes a referral for a speech therapy evaluation, is that referral retroactive for the testing that was completed the year or two before? In other words, the student isn’t due for a re-evaluation for another year or two.

**A.** Having a referral document like the one recommended by TEA referencing the prior evaluation is the most viable option, per HHSC.

**Q.** Can an SLP work as a prescribing NPI for referral for services? Can this be done with a template referral/ letter of medical necessity for our existing students, or will an evaluation need to be completed to work as a referral from a SLP who is a NPI provider?

**A.** Yes, an SLP can refer. TEA has recommended a referral form. A prescription or referral is not required specifically for a re-evaluation, provided the prescription or referral for services had occurred in the previous three years.

**Q.** Can you tell me if we have a speech pathologist that already supervises an SLP-A and she has an NPI number, can she sign off on the referrals for evaluation for Speech and not actually do the speech evaluation herself?

**A.** This is not advisable.

**Q.** If an SLP Assistant delivered a service and documented within the new 7-day policy, would it still meet the 7-day policy requirement if the SLP supervisor didn’t sign off on the service until after 7 days of the service rendered?

**A.** You are advised to have the SLP sign off on an SLP-Assistant’s services/billing logs within 7 days from the date of service.

**Q.** We understand that an SLP’s evaluation can serve as the referral for ST SHARS services. And, going forward, if the SLP self-referred this would require a referring provider NPI number from the SLP. Does this also apply to SLP Interns? In other words, can an SLP evaluation (conducted by an SLP Intern) serve as the self-referral for ST SHARS services thus requiring an NPI number from the SLP Intern?

**A.** The person completing the referral/evaluation must have an NPI number and be a Medicaid provider.

**Q.** Do SLPs, LSSPs, OTs and PTs continue to wait until after the ARD to document evaluations in our SHARS platform, or do they need to document evaluations by the 7th day? The ARD is when the committee agrees to the evaluation and recommendations. I am not sure if the provider can bill for an actual evaluation when the ARD happens after the 7 days.

**A.** The district can bill for the evaluation, if documented within 7 days from the date of service. The billing process does not indicate eligibility, as that is determined by the ARD Committee.

**Q.** For students with evaluations already on file and signed by a SLP, if the SLP has an active NPI number and enrolls in Tx Medicaid prior to the effective date, can the evaluation for speech services previously performed by the SLP suffice as the referral?

**A.** Yes, but you are advised to attach the referral form recommended by TEA.

**Q.** For students new to speech, can an SLP's evaluation suffice as the referral if they have an NPI & are enrolled in TX Medicaid, or do they have to complete a referral for the evaluation of speech and sign it themselves? (seems like they would be completing a referral for themselves to perform an evaluation of speech), or is the referral supposed to come from another source (such as a parent or teacher) but signed off on by the SLP?

**A.** The SLP’s evaluation can serve as the referral for speech therapy services. Please note that the evaluation serving as the “referral” for speech therapy services is different than a Child Find “referral” for evaluation, despite both using the word “referral”.

Q. In the schools, a professional may conduct several evaluation sessions over a period of time. For example, the timeline to complete an initial evaluation is 45 school days. So, an SLP may putt the child for an hour one week and then two weeks later conduct another hour of testing. Would the professional need to document each of those sessions within 7 days from the date of each service, or just the initial note?

A. Although the TMPPM SHARS Handbook does not include specific requirements relating to the 45 school day timeline, it would be best practice for the provider to document each of the sessions included in the evaluation within 7 days of the service delivery.

