



Referrals & Enrollment

TCHAT Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets forth requirements and guidelines for receiving and processing referrals.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all HRIs and their subcontracted partners who receive Consortium funds to receive and process referrals to provide TCHAT services. This policy does not apply to Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM).

3. Policy

3.1 Eligibility

Referrals should be accepted and processed year-round for students aged 4-21 enrolled in a school in Texas at the time of referral. If a district offers a PreK program for 3-year-olds, referrals for these students may also be processed at the HRI's discretion.

Referrals should not be accepted and processed for:

- Students experiencing crisis. The school should be directed to follow its school crisis protocol. After the crisis has been managed, the HRI may, based on the HRI's capability, choose to accept and process the referral.
- Students who cannot meaningfully participate in a telehealth assessment or service. If this is unknown at the time of referral, the referral can be accepted and processed as usual. If this is determined after the referral has been processed, care coordination can be provided to identify more appropriate services.
- Students who do not reside in Texas at the time of referral.

Therapeutic interventions should be provided only to students. Support to enrolled students' parents(s)/guardian(s) should be related to the student's treatment plan. School staff are not eligible for TCHAT services.

3.2 Referral Sources

The primary source of referrals should be active public/charter and home schools. Public/charter schools must have an active Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on file and be enrolled in Trayt for the HRI to accept and process referrals. Referrals from public/charter schools in districts without an active MOU should not be accepted. Private school referrals may be accepted at the discretion of each HRI. Private schools must have an active MOU on file and be enrolled in Trayt for the HRI to accept and process referrals. Home school referrals may come directly from the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) and may be enrolled at the discretion of the HRI provided the HRI is not on waitlist status (see section 3.3).

To maintain the focus on TCHAT as a school-based service, provider referrals (including CPAN referrals) and referrals from community-based organizations and parent(s)/guardian(s) (unless the child is home schooled) should be referred to the student's school for the school to determine the best mental health option for the student. Referrals directly from providers (including CPAN referrals) and referrals from community-based organizations and parent(s)/guardian(s) (unless the child is home schooled) should not be accepted or processed at any time.

3.3 Referral Processing

A student is in a referred status when a referral has been submitted and before the first appointment has been scheduled.

Referrals must be submitted in Trayt by the TCHAT school liaison after obtaining verbal consent from the parent(s)/guardian(s). If the school experiences issues entering the referral, the HRI may enter the referral on behalf of the school until the issue is resolved. TCHAT school liaisons may submit other documentation at the time of referral, but it should not be required and should not delay the processing of the referral.

Ninety percent (90%) of referrals should be processed within 15 business days. Referral processing includes:

- Reviewing the information submitted with the referral and contacting the TCHAT school liaison if needed to ask follow-up questions.
- Triaging the referral.
- Editing the information in the referral form if needed.
- Contacting the referred student's parent(s)/guardian(s) within three business days after the referral is received.
- Notifying the TCHAT school liaison if unsuccessful in contacting the student's parent/guardian.
- Collecting documentation from the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Scheduling the intake appointment and enrolling in Trayt, or archiving the referral in Trayt.

If, over a two-month period, 60% of referrals contacted cannot be enrolled and a first appointment scheduled within 20 business days from the referral date, the HRI will be on a waitlist status and should follow relevant guidance in the Services & Discharge policy related to waitlists and transfers.

Consent for TCHAT services should only be requested after a TCHAT school liaison submits a referral. HRIs are responsible for obtaining consent documents.

Intake appointments should be scheduled after all consent paperwork has been completed and received by the HRI and the student is moved from Referred to Enrolled.

4. Definitions

Active School

The school has a signed and executed MOU to provide TCHAT services on the school's campus.

Archived Referral

A request for TCHAT services that will not be processed for enrollment. A student whose referral has been archived will not receive services at the time of archive but may be re-referred and receive services at a later date.

At-Risk Student

A student whose mental health may pose safety concerns for them or others, but there is no known immediate threat.

Community-Based Organization

A business, agency, or entity that serves children/adolescents and is not a school or provider.

Consent

Permission to provide TCHAT services to a referred student.

CPAN

A Consortium-funded program that offers peer-to-peer provider phone consults, referrals and resources, and behavioral health continuing medical education (CME).

Documentation

Written consents that should be collected from the parent(s)/guardian(s) after the referral has been submitted.

Enrolled Student

A referred student for whom consent paperwork and assessments have been received and appointments are ready to be scheduled.

Home School

A school that does not have oversight from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and education is provided at home or outside of a public, charter, or private school setting.

HRI

A health-related institution of higher education that administers the TCHAT program.

In-Person Services

Services not provided by telehealth or telemedicine (services provided remotely via the use of technology).

Intake Appointment

The first appointment scheduled with an enrolled student and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

Memorandum of Understanding

A formal agreement between an HRI and a school district to provide TCHAT services to the district's students.

Non-Active School

A school without an executed MOU and where services are not yet live on the school's campus.

Parent/Guardian

The adult(s) legally responsible for the student who has been referred.

Private School

A school or district that does not have oversight from TEA.

Provider

A healthcare practitioner or group of healthcare practitioners who do not provide TCHAT services.

Public or Charter School

A school with oversight from TEA and that is assigned a school district code by TEA.

Referral

A formal request for TCHAT services.

Referral Acceptance

The initiation of referral processing after a referral has been submitted.

Referral Form

The electronic form in Trayt that TCHAT school liaisons should complete to submit a referral.

Referral Processing

The steps required to enroll a student in TCHAT after a referral has been submitted.

Referral Source

The entity or person who requests a referral for TCHAT services.

Referred Student

A student for whom a referral has been submitted but the student has not been enrolled.

Re-Referral

A formal request for TCHAT services for a student who was previously referred.

School-Aged Patient

A student seen by a healthcare provider.

School-Based Service

Services are provided on a school campus and school staff submit referrals for services.

School Crisis Protocol

A written plan of action developed and maintained by the school district with steps to be taken during an incident that imminently impacts the safety of students, faculty, and/or staff.

School Staff

Any person employed by a public, charter, private, or home school.

Student

A child or adolescent generally aged 4-18 who is enrolled in a PreK-12 public, charter, private, or home school program in Texas.

Student Experiencing Crisis

A student whose mental health poses an immediate threat of harm to themselves or others.

Subcontracted Partner

A hospital system or behavioral health provider organization contracted by an HRI to provide TCHAT services to students through an MOU with a school district.

Summer and Winter Breaks

The period of time, typically in late December-early January and late May-mid-August, when school is not in session.

TCHAT

Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine. TCHAT provides short-term, school-based mental health services to students.

TCHAT School Liaison

A staff member from a school who submits referrals and coordinates appointments for their school.

Therapeutic Intervention

A targeted, evidence-based approach to addressing specific mental health issues that a person is facing.

Trayt

TCHAT's centralized data management system. TCHAT school liaisons submit referrals in Trayt and HRIs document referral processing and session data in Trayt.

Treatment Plan

A written plan to resolve or reduce an enrolled student's symptoms.

Triage

A process to determine the order in which to process referrals.

Verbal Consent

Permission to submit a referral for TCHAT services, obtained by a TCHAT school liaison through a conversation with a student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Waitlist Status

An HRI's status if 60% of referrals are not able to be enrolled and a first appointment scheduled within 20 business days from the referral date.

5. Related Policies & Procedures

Policy/Procedure	Link
Referrals	
Services & Discharge	

Procedures	
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6. Other Resources

Resource	Link
Submitting referrals in Trayt (resource for TCHAT school liaisons)	
Sample consent form	TCHAT Model Consent Form – TCMHCC (utsystem.edu)
HHSC Outreach, Screening, Assessment and Referral programs	Outreach, Screening, Assessment and Referral Texas Health and Human Services

7. Version History

Effective Date	Description of Change	Sections Changed
[Date]	New policy	All

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