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Subject: Standardized Training Requirement for Paraprofessionals	From: Chris A. Gault, Ph.D. <i>CAG</i> Medicaid and Special Initiatives Coordinator
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As part of the review and revision of Georgia’s state plan for Medicaid Rehabilitation Option services, the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases (DMHDDAD) has been required to specify a minimum standard training requirement for staff who are not licensed mental health professionals and/or do not have one of a number of recognized credentials but who provide reimbursable services for an approved provider agency (see Attachment A for a list of recognized credentials). Provider employees who are not licensed professionals or holders of an approved credential are hereafter referred to as paraprofessionals.

DMHDDAD developed a standardized training curriculum that was submitted to and approved by the Department of Community Health (DCH), the state’s Medicaid agency. In keeping with our goal to provide the same quality services to all consumers regardless of source of funding, demonstrated mastery of each topic area within the training curriculum will be necessary in order for paraprofessionals to provide either state-funded or Medicaid-reimbursable services in the near future. This requirement will be effective on the date of the implementation of the new Medicaid state plan amendment which is expected at the earliest on October 1, 2008 or possibly on January 1, 2009.

Paraprofessionals who are already employed by a provider agency prior to the implementation of the new state plan amendment will have the option of “testing out” of the online training requirements. In addition to topics such as information about mental illnesses and addictive diseases, recovery principles, and professional relationships that will be addressed via online training modules or testing out, other skills-based competencies such as CPR or crisis intervention/de-escalation are included in the Standardized Training Requirement for Paraprofessionals and documentation of completion of training and skills mastery in these areas also will be required.

In order to support and assist providers in meeting these requirements, DMHDDAD has contracted with a national provider of online training and education for behavioral healthcare staff and is providing free access for paraprofessional staff of enrolled