Administering and Scoring the PHQ-A Screening Questionnaire

Administering

- Patient checks in at the Reception desk.
- Reception will present the PHQ-A (PHQ-9 modified for Adolescents) Questionnaire using the script below:
  "We are screening for symptoms of depressed mood at all 12-year-old physical exams. Please have your child fill out this questionnaire if he/she wants to, or we can administer the form for him/her. Dr. _______________ (or state the name of the provider or NP if the provider is an NP) will discuss the results with all of you together during the appointment."
- The PHQ-A (PHQ-9 modified for Adolescents) takes less than five minutes to complete and score.
- If patient decides to complete the PHQ-A by himself/herself, he/she should be left alone to complete the PHQ-A in a private area, such as an exam room or a private area of the waiting room.
- The PHQ-A can also be administered and scored by a nurse, medical technician, physician assistant, physician or other office staff.
- Patients should be informed of their confidentiality rights before the PHQ-A is administered.
- It is recommended that parents are informed that a mental health checkup will be administered as part of the exam.
- Office staff will give the completed PHQ-A to the provider as it may have comments on it, and unclear marks made by the patient can be reviewed.

Scoring

- Each item on the PHQ-A is scored as follows:
  Not at all = 0  Several Days = 1  More than half the days = 2  Nearly every day = 3
- To calculate the score, add all of the item scores together:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Weighted Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several Days</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than half the days</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly every day</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructions on coding and interpreting the scores

Coding

- HCPCS outcome codes used to bill for administering the PHQ-A Screening Questionnaire:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHQ-A Scored POSITIVE for Depressive Symptoms</th>
<th>PHQ-A scored NEGATIVE for Depressive Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 5</td>
<td>≤ 0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G8431 Follow-up plan by PCP or referral to BH provider</td>
<td>G8510 A follow-up plan is not required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpreting the scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total score</th>
<th>Recommended Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **None or Minimal depressive symptoms**
  - 0-4
  - PCP reviews with patient
  - Confirms negatives
  - Option to discuss additional issues
  - Considers other diagnosis (ADHD, etc) and treats accordingly, if applicable

- **Mild to Moderate depressive symptoms**
  - 5-14
  - Watchful waiting
  - Supportive counseling
  - Educate member to call if symptoms deteriorate
  - Repeat PHQ-A at PCP follow-up
  - Consider referral if PHQ-A scores fall in high risk areas

- **Moderate to severe depressive symptoms**
  - 15-19
  - Consider anti-depressant medication management through PCP (w/ consultation if needed)
  - Consider referral/linkage to community-based organizations, school-based counseling, etc
  - Consider referral to psychiatrist for medication and/or therapist for therapy services

- **Severe depressive symptoms**
  - 20-27
  - Immediate referral to CalOptima Behavioral Health Line at 1-855-877-3885

- Patients that score positive on their PHQ-A should be evaluated by the primary care provider (PCP) to determine if the symptoms endorsed on the questionnaire are significant, causing impairment and warrant a referral to a mental health specialist or follow-up or treatment by the PCP.
- For patients who score negative on the PHQ-A, it is recommended that the PCP briefly review the symptoms marked as "sometimes" and "often" with the patient.

Please complete the CMS 1500 Health Insurance Claim form and mail it to:

**CalOptima Claims Department**
PO Box 11037
Orange, CA 92856

Engaging and Informing Parents

- Inform parents of the screening results (positive or negative), and recommendations for referral, treatment or follow-up.
- Provide parents with information about the next steps and offer support and assistance with finding or making an appointment with a behavioral health specialist.
- Give information to parents about why the referral is being made, how the services you are referring can help, and details about where you are sending them.
- Compile a list of appropriate referral resources in the community and share that list with families of patients that receive a referral.