**PRACTICAL PEARL: Medical Clearance for Behavioral Health treatment**

**INTRODUCTION**
- Pediatricians are often asked to provide medical clearance for patients before admission to an inpatient psychiatric facility or after a child elopes from a supervised foster or group home.
- DCF is working with community agencies to limit “medical clearance” requests to occasions when there’s an actual concern for illness/injury, and are suggesting that these agencies behave as a “prudent parent” might in a similar situation.
- When medical clearance is needed, every effort should be made to have the child evaluated in their medical home.

**INITIAL EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT BY PRIMARY CARE**
- Medical clearance should include a review of the child’s history as well as current medications and any specific active concerns.
- Sexually active girls may benefit from HCG screening.
- Lab and radiology testing are rarely necessary and should be dictated by clinical scenario (though STI screening and immunization updates may be offered).
- Drug screening is generally not indicated for medical reasons and is not recommended unless there are signs of acute intoxication.
- Request that accompanying adult (foster parent, group home worker) verify and communicate available medical information with child’s DCF office.

https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/3/e20161570

**WHEN TO REFER TO ED**
- Evidence of active intoxication
- Sexual Assault in past 5 days with need (and patient consent for) evidence collection
- Acute illness or injury

**HOW TO REFER**
- (413) 794-KIDS for subspecialty
- 800-222-1222 for substance abuse/poison (med toxicity)
- Family Advocacy Center Social Worker (413) 794-5070
- (413) 794-8818 to speak with ED physician

**WHAT TO EXPECT FROM BAYSTATE CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL VISIT**
- Review of history as available from child, accompanying adult, and medical record
- Safety screening
- Physical exam
- Pregnancy and STI screening when indicated
- Initial treatment for any identified illness or injuries