

## **Executive Summary**

### **Practice Parameter for the Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Bipolar Disorder**

The purpose of this document is to introduce PerformCare's practice parameter for the treatment and assessment of children and adolescents with bipolar disorder. This practice parameter is meant to provide medical and psychological health providers with useful, quick reference tools for treating clients with bipolar disorder. They are intended to extend, not replace, sound clinical judgment. In particular, this adopted parameter does not supersede the responsibility of the treating clinician to remain current on medications and informed on key regulatory and professional organizations when making important treatment decisions.

PerformCare has adopted the American Academy Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's "Practice Parameter for the Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adolescents With Bipolar Disorder (2007)." The following guide is designed to help providers, practitioners, and interested readers become familiar with key features of the documents and find the sections that will be most useful to them.

This parameter was developed through the completion of a scientific literature review, review of relevant books and review articles, consultations with experts in the field, and the authors' own work in this area. The authors note that the parameter focuses primarily on bipolar I disorder as it is studied most often in juveniles. Based on the reviewed resources, the parameter explores definitions related to the diagnosis, review of the disorder's history, epidemiology, risk factors, clinical presentation, diagnostic controversy, and recommendations. The recommendations section lists 11 recommendations for the assessment and treatment of children and adolescents with bipolar disorder. Psychotherapeutic interventions and pharmacotherapy are discussed in the recommendations section as well as the importance of conducting thorough evaluations when a bipolar diagnosis is suspected.

### **The DSM-5: Bipolar and Related Disorders**

Changes to the diagnosis of bipolar disorders that were made in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) are noted below.

Criterion A for manic and hypomanic episodes now stresses the importance of changes in energy, activity, and mood. A new specifier, with mixed features, has been added and can be applied to episodes of mania or hypomania when depressive features are observed. This specifier can also be applied to episodes of depression when characteristics of mania or hypomania are observed. The diagnosis of other specified bipolar and related disorder has been added, which can include the following situations: short duration hypomanic episodes, hypomanic episodes with insufficient symptoms and major depressive episodes, hypomanic episode without a prior major depressive episode, and a short-duration cyclothymia (less than 24 months).