Executive Summary

Practice Guideline for the Psychiatric Evaluation of Adults, Second Edition

The purpose of this document is to introduce PerformCare’s practice guideline for the psychiatric evaluation of adults. These practice guidelines are meant to provide medical and psychological health providers with useful, quick reference tools for the psychiatric evaluation of adults. They are intended to extend, not replace, sound clinical judgment. In particular, these adopted guidelines do 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 Psychiatric Association’s “Practice Guideline for the Psychiatric Evaluation of Adults, Second Edition (2006).” 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 guideline was developed through the completion of a comprehensive literature review. The initial draft of the guideline was completed by the work group, which included psychiatrists with clinical as well as research expertise in psychiatric evaluation. Multiple drafts were completed with widespread review. Fourteen organizations and more than 64 individuals submitted significant comments. The final draft was approved by the American Psychiatric Association Assembly and Board of Trustees.

Based on the reviewed resources, the guideline explains the purpose of an evaluation followed by the sites where evaluations can take place. Domains of the evaluation are discussed. Table 1 lists the domains and specific questions that should be answered under each listed domain. Table 2 identifies questions to ask related to childhood developmental history. The evaluation process section explores methods of obtaining the information, such as a patient interview, as well as the use of rating scales. Table 3 provides a list of clinical rating scales that can be used during an evaluation. The evaluation process section also discusses the use of diagnostic tests when completing an evaluation. Table 4 lists tests that may be indicated as part of a psychiatric evaluation, such as basic laboratory tests. The process of the assessment is discussed noting clinical formulation, including risk assessment, diagnosis, and initial treatment plan as pertinent factors to include in the assessment process. Special considerations when completing an evaluation are discussed, such as privacy and confidentiality. Finally, future research needs are explored such as further study of clinical rating scales in clinical samples including patients with co-occurring disorders.