

Residential Treatment Center Protocol

An RTC is defined as a psychiatric institution that provides campus-based intensive and extensive evaluation and treatment of children and adolescents with severe and chronic emotional disturbances who require a self-contained therapeutic, educational, and recreational program in a residential setting. Medical necessity for admission to an RTC level of care must be documented by the presence of all the criteria given below in Severity of Need and Intensity of Service. The child or adolescent must have a mental health disorder amenable to active clinical treatment. The evaluation and assignment of a DSM-5 diagnosis must result from a face-to-face psychiatric evaluation.

For additional information on eligibility: [RTC eligibility criteria.](#)

Lead Agency Present Protocol

In the case of system involved youth (DSS,DJS) the lead agency facilitates the admission process and acts as the custodian regarding treatment decisions and discharge planning.

No Lead Agency Present Protocol

If a youth is not system involved and meets eligibility criteria a family can pursue an RTC placement through the following resources:

- **Voluntary Placement Agreement:** Voluntary placement is primarily for youth who meet eligibility criteria and do not have Medical Assistance / current non-public Individualized Education Plan (IEP). A VPA is accessed through the local Department of Social Services and is a planned and time-limited approach with the goal of returning children safely to their home without continued system involvement. A VPA requires that DSS assumes temporary custody. Baltimore City Department of Social Services contact information is: 410-361-2235.
- **Local Care Team:** The Baltimore City Local Care Team (LCT) consists of a group of public agency representatives and other human services agencies that include but are not limited to Family League of Baltimore (Family League); Department of Juvenile Services (DJS); Department of Social Services (DSS); Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPSS); Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF); Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD); Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Children & Family Success (MOCFS); Behavioral Health Systems Baltimore (BHSB); and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). The LCT is intended to support families in accessing services and recommend resources for youth with intensive needs. Family members, school faculty, and community members can make referrals directly to the Local Care Team, and youth ages 16 to 21 can self-refer. The Local Care Team meets weekly and can be accessed at: [Local Care Team - Family League](#)
- **Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB):** All RTC requests are processed through BHSB as the local behavioral health authority. In the case that a youth is not system involved, BHSB serves as the lead agency but does not maintain custody/guardianship. Behavioral Health System Baltimore does not directly oversee Maryland Residential Treatment Centers and provides only administrative oversight to ensure youth meet medical necessity criteria through the CON process. In the case of a critical incident BHSB will follow up with the RTC provider to ensure appropriate guardian notification has occurred and follow up as appropriate.



CON Process

The Certificate of Need (CON) is time-sensitive in that **all elements must be dated within 30 days from when the participant enters the RTC**. There is no standardized CON form; each provider uses his or her own format and all formats will be accepted if they each recommend an RTC placement.

A CON must include the following:

- A psychiatric evaluation, completed by a board-certified psychiatrist and must include a summary of the participant's presenting problem, current psychiatric symptoms and behaviors, treatment, medication, family, and educational history; all applicable diagnoses and a clear recommendation that the participant be placed in an RTC.
- A psychosocial evaluation, completed by a licensed mental health professional. The psychosocial evaluation may include the components in the psychiatric evaluation but provide further detail regarding: the presenting problem, family involvement, religious, social, educational, and legal history, and a clear recommendation that the participant be placed in an RTC.
- A history and physical examination signed by a physician or certified registered nurse practitioner (CRNP) that attests that the participant is medically appropriate and cleared for RTC placement.
- Additional information needed:
 - Medical Assistance number
 - Name and contact information of lead agency representative.
 - Expected date of placement
- CON documents should be sent encrypted to Child & Family (C&F) Services Team at BHSB at: E-Mail: CAYA@BHSBaltimore.org. A Child & Family Team member will contact you upon receipt. All requests are processed within 72 business hours.

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