



# QR Tips

June 2015

## Crisis Intervention and Crisis Psychotherapy

### Crisis Intervention (CPT 90899)

A crisis is an unplanned event that results from the individual's need for immediate service intervention which, if untreated, presents an imminent threat to the patient or others. This may include, but is not limited to assessment, evaluation, collateral and therapy. This code is used only when services provided were not described in another CPT code.

**Crisis Intervention** is a service, lasting **less than 24 hours**, to or on behalf of a child for a condition that requires **more timely response than a regularly scheduled visit**. Service activities include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: assessment, collateral and therapy.

- Crisis Intervention Services may either be **face-to-face** or **by telephone** with the child or the child's Significant Support Person and may be provided **anywhere** in the community.
- Crisis Intervention shall be **based on minutes** of staff time.
- The maximum claimable time for Crisis Intervention in a **24-hour period is eight hours (480 minutes)** per client.
- County and contract programs **should coordinate** billings to ensure that the 8 hours limit is not exceeded. This situation could arise when a county/contract program is managing a crisis and contacts the Crisis Evaluation Team for a 5585/5150 evaluation. In some scenarios, both programs could submit crisis claims that **exceed 480 minutes**. Should this occur the Medical Billing Unit (MBU) will not submit those claims exceeding the **8 hour limit**.
- Lockouts Crisis Intervention is not reimbursable on days when Crisis Residential Treatment Services, Psychiatric Health Facility Services, or Psychiatric Inpatient Services are reimbursed by Medi-Cal **except for the day of admission** to those services.

If a crisis evaluation is handled by two clinicians, in order for each to bill, it would be **necessary for each clinician to document separately** what he/she did in the encounter. Two clinicians doing the same task(s). Further, if two clinicians are present and one is there for the sole purpose of providing safety, the **one who is there for safety** cannot bill for his/her time.

### Crisis Psychotherapy 90839

Crisis Psychotherapy is considered "**an urgent assessment and history of a crisis state, a mental status exam, and a disposition**. The treatment includes psychotherapy, mobilization of resources to defuse the crisis and restore safety, and implementation of psychotherapeutic intervention to minimize the potential for psychological trauma. The presenting problem is typically life threatening or complex and requires immediate attention to a patient in high distress." (CPT Manual, 2013)

- Clinicians must be licensed or license eligible (waivered) to use this CPT code.

This code is typically used when the client is seen for a crisis evaluation and **the clinician is able to de-escalate the client through the use of psychotherapy and no further action is needed** at that moment. As with all codes, a provider must operate within their scope of practice.

If the client requires hospitalization or the provider needs to complete 5150 paperwork, contact an outside provider regarding beds/placement, etc., then **this code would not be the proper code to select**. In a crisis assessment involving those types of activities, 90899 Crisis Intervention would be the accurate code to indicate.

Crisis Psychotherapy is computed by **face-to-face time with patient and/or family member and cannot be a service provided over-the-phone**.

This code is a **time based code**. If a provider meets with the client between 1-29 minutes, this code cannot be used. Instead, the crisis intervention code 90899 would be used. The initial time range for this service is between 30-74 minutes. Should a provider **exceed the 74 minutes**, each **additional 30 minutes can be authorized by the use of an add-on code**.

The add-on code of +90840 would be specified with the number of units for each 30 minute block over the 74 minutes.

**(75-104 Crisis Psychotherapy minutes)**, the provider would indicate the main service as 90839 and use the **add-on code +90840** and indicate 1 unit.

**(105-134 Crisis Psychotherapy minutes)** the provider would indicate the main service as 90839 and use the add-on code +90840 and indicate 2 units.

### **90899-14 Crisis Intervention Non-Billable**

Non-billable crisis are those provided in **non-billable locations such as juvenile hall/jail**. This may be a valid and useful service, but is not billable to most insurers, including Medi-Cal. Nevertheless, a progress note should be completed and submitted in IRIS with documented service time associated with this non-billable code.

### **90899-10 Med Escort Non-Billable**

This code is used when a client is placed on a 5150 hold and **staff accompanies and remains with the client at a medical hospital until they are medically cleared for a psychiatric admission**.

This code is used ONLY when services provided **are not described in another CPT code**.

### **90899-116 Crisis Intervention Non-Billable Travel**

The travel time associated with a billable crisis service provided when the provider has traveled **between two (2) Medi-Cal sites** and provided a billable crisis service. The travel time would be noted in the section provided next to the 90899-116 code. For more examples, please refer to the Travel Time section within this manual.