



Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) New Provider Types for 2024: Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT) and Mental Health Counselors (MHC)

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CMS began providing coverage for marriage & family therapy and mental health services effective 01/01/2024. This comes at a perfect time, as more Americans are seeking help to treat marriage & family issues and mental health continues to be a rising concern nationwide. CMS's Strategic Plan has 6 strategic pillars of focus which drive the agency's efforts to cut costs, improve efficiency, and enhance access to care, including increased access to behavioral health services.¹ Expanding access to care requires creativity and flexibility in light of the nationwide, chronic provider shortage.² Let's discuss one creative strategy to leverage existing behavioral healthcare resources that was recently passed into law.

H.R.2617 – Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023 Section 4121 provides for coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under Part B of the Medicare program.³ This is good news for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs), Mental Health Counselors (MHCs), behavioral healthcare facilities, and patients, as the more than 62,000 MFTs⁴ and more than 344,000 MHCs⁵ in the U.S will now be accessible for services for Medicare patients effective January 1, 2024. Enrollment as a Medicare provider is required.

To be enrolled for Medicare, MFTs and MHCs must meet the CMS specifications outlined in Section 4121, which indicates that the individual “has performed at least 2 years of clinical supervised experience in marriage and family therapy or mental health counseling” in addition to possessing the required degree and licensing requirements. If you are already enrolled in Medicaid and have an NPI, you must still enroll in Medicare separately using the same NPI.⁶ Click [here](#) to read the CMS Frequently Asked Questions Provider Enrollment Guide for MHTs and MHCs.

¹ CMS. (n.d.). 2023 CMS Strategic Framework. <https://www.cms.gov/about-cms/what-we-do/cms-strategic-plan>

² American Medical Association. (2023, October 25). *AMA president sounds alarm on national physician shortage*. <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-president-sounds-alarm-national-physician-shortage>

³ Congress.gov. (2021 – 2022). *H.R.2617 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023*. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2617>

⁴ US Bureau of Labor Statistics. (May 2022). *Employment Occupation and Wages, May 2022 21-1013 Marriage and Family Therapists*. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211013.htm>

⁵ US Bureau of Labor Statistics. (May 2022). *Employment Occupation and Wages, May 2022 21-1018 Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors*. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211018.htm>

⁶ CMS Center for Program Integrity. (September 2023). *Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT) and Mental Health Counselors (MHC) Provider Enrollment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/marriage-and-family-therapists-and-mental-health-counselors-faq-09052023.pdf>