

**SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
DOMESTIC RELATIONS PROCEDURAL RULES COMMITTEE**

ADOPTION REPORT

Amendment of Pa.R.Civ.P. 1910.16-6

On April 15, 2025, the Supreme Court amended Pennsylvania Rule of Civil Procedure 1910.16-6 governing the allocation of psychological and psychiatric services as medical expenses between the parties if those expenses are not reimbursed by a third party. The Domestic Relations Procedural Rules Committee has prepared this Adoption Report describing the rulemaking process. An Adoption Report should not be confused with Comments to the rules. See Pa.R.J.A. 103, cmt. The statements contained herein are those of the Committee, not the Court.

The Committee received several requests for the amendment of Pa.R.Civ.P. 1910.16-6(c) to categorize psychological and psychiatric expenses as medical expenses subject to mandatory allocation. Prior to amendment, the rule, which has existed in some form since the original support guidelines were adopted and became effective September 30, 1989, excluded allocation of those expenses unless ordered by the court.

Since the adoption of Rule 1910.16-6(c), the coverage and provision of mental health services has evolved. In 2010, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equality Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) was enacted to require that insurance companies provide equivalent coverage for mental health services as they do for other medical and surgical benefits, if covered. See 29 U.S.C. § 1185a(a)(3)(A) and 42 U.S.C. § 300gg-26(a)(3)(A). Similarly, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act built on the MHPAEA, requiring all new small group and individual market plans to cover ten essential health benefit categories, including mental health and substance use disorder services, and to cover them at parity with medical and surgical benefits. See 42 U.S.C. § 18022(b)(1)(E).

Moreover, children covered by the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) receive mental health services. See 42 U.S.C. § 1397cc(c)(6). These services include counseling, therapy, medication management, and substance use disorder treatment. See *id.* Children enrolled in Medicaid also receive a wide range of “medically necessary” services, including mental health services. See 42 U.S.C. § 1396d(r)(1)(A)(ii).

The requests for amendment to categorize psychological and psychiatric expenses as medical expenses follow the existing statutory inclusion of those expenses as medical expenses. The Domestic Relations Code requires one or both parents to provide “medical support” for children of parties in support matters. See 23 Pa.C.S. § 4326(a). “Medical support” is defined as “[h]ealth care coverage, which includes coverage under a health insurance plan...” and “health care coverage” includes “coverage for

medical, dental...psychological, psychiatric or other health care services...” See *id.* § 4326(l).

The Committee published a proposed amendment of Pa.R.Civ.P. 1910.16-6(c) for comment. See 52 Pa.B. 7807 (December 17, 2022). The proposal would move the references to “psychiatric” and “psychological” expenses from subdivision (c)(1)(iii) to subdivision (c)(1)(ii) so those expenses would be allocated without a specific order of court in a manner similar to other medical expenses.

The Committee also proposed adding the following paragraph to the Comment:

The contested necessity of unreimbursed medical services should be raised as a custody or other matter. The intent of this rule is strictly to apportion costs of these services, not to determine if the services are appropriate for the child or obligee.

Commenters agreed with the proposed amendment of the rule text but disagreed with the above-commentary. The primary contention was the commentary sowed confusion whether medical necessity could be determined in a support proceeding.

The Committee revised the commentary to make explicit that a determination of medical necessity can be made in a support proceeding, as well as in a custody proceeding. The case law suggests that medical necessity, in practice, may fall within the purview of a support proceeding. Further, the Committee could discern little difference with the application of Pa.R.Civ.P. 1910.16-6(d)(1) (“If the trier-of-fact determines that private school or summer camp is reasonable under the parties’ circumstances, the trier-of-fact shall apportion the expense to the parties.”) and a determination of medical necessity. If the court can decide about attending a private school or summer camp in a support matter, then the court can make a decision about necessity of a medical service or medical supplies in a support matter. The revised commentary also contains a proviso that a determination of medical necessity in a support proceeding should be subject to judicial review if the trier-of-fact is not a judge.

The Committee also added commentary to provide guidance through examples of unreasonable medical expenses. The examples are not intended to be exhaustive.

This amendment becomes effective on July 1, 2025.