InterQual Behavioral Health Criteria assist in making initial and concurrent level-of-care decisions based on each patient's presentation. The comprehensive range of level-of-care alternatives allows for movement up and down the continuum of care, while content is tailored to the needs of seniors, adults, adolescents and children. The depth of the criteria allows reviewers to consider the severity of illness as well as other episode-specific variables and match the level of care to the patient's current condition.

The Criteria reflect clinical interpretations and analyses and cannot alone either resolve medical ambiguities of particular situations or provide the sole basis for definitive decisions. The Criteria are intended solely for use as screening guidelines with respect to the medical appropriateness of healthcare services and not for final clinical or payment determinations concerning the type or level of medical care provided, or proposed to be provided, to a patient.

Development of InterQual Criteria

InterQual clinical decision support criteria are based on well-researched medical evidence that is reviewed and updated annually. The criteria consist of rule-based clinical indicators or statements that focus on each individual patient’s clinical presentation. The content is developed in annual cycles with five stages.

- **Select new topics and content for revisions.** McKesson’s clinical team selects new areas to develop and areas to revise based on systematic, continuous review of the most current medical and behavioral health literature and feedback from clients and clinical consultants over the course of the year.
- **Research evidence-based literature.** Our clinical team performs a comprehensive search and critical appraisal of the evidence-based literature, selecting the best available valid evidence. Input from our external consultants is incorporated into the initial drafts or revisions. There are more than 16,000 citations within the InterQual clinical decision support tools. All recent references in the criteria are assigned classifications that identify the type of evidence. Providers who access the criteria via Review Manager can link directly from short citations in the InterQual notes to the related bibliography references and abstracts. The McKesson Evidence Classification system identifies the type of evidence as follows:
  - **Class I:** Meta analysis or systematic review
  - **Class II:** Randomized controlled trial
  - **Class III:** Observational or epidemiologic study
  - **Class IV:** Evidence-based guideline
  - **Class V:** Expert opinion, panel consensus, literature review, text or reference book, descriptive study, case report, or case series
- **Review and revise.** Clinical consultants review the content and suggest revisions to the McKesson team, which synthesizes them and then sends the content back to the consultants for further reviews in an iterative, consensus-building process.
- **Validate.** Clinical consultants who have not been part of the process up to this point assess and validate the content for clinical accuracy.
- **Format and review for quality assurance.** Content is prepared for software and reviewed for clinical consistency and completeness across products by McKesson’s clinical staff before distribution to our clients.
Behavioral Health Criteria Products

The Behavioral Health Criteria products are:
- Adult Psychiatry
- Adolescent Psychiatry
- Child Psychiatry
- Geriatric Psychiatry
- Substance Use Disorders & Dual Diagnosis
- Residential & Community-Based Treatment

Review Types

Within the products, there are three types of criteria, corresponding to three types of reviews:

Initial Reviews. Initial review is conducted for a patient who is not currently in treatment for a behavioral health disorder and assists in triaging the patient to the most appropriate level of care. The reviewer determines whether the patient's clinical findings indicate an Immediate safety risk, requiring admission to inpatient / observation, or indicate a Potential safety risk. Initial reviews are used for:
- All new patients, meaning patients seeking behavioral health services for the first time
- Patients who have been out of treatment for a period of time, for example, three months
- Patients who were in treatment but signed out against medical advice (AMA) and now present for continued treatment

Initial reviews also help to verify the medical necessity and appropriateness for admission to a particular level of care. The level of care determinations are based on age-specific criteria such as history or expectation of patient adherence, functioning, risk, availability and quality of the patient’s support system, and available transportation.

Concurrent Reviews. Concurrent review is conducted to validate continued stay in a particular level of care or to determine the next appropriate level of care. To validate continued stay in a particular level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Continued Stay criteria. To determine the next appropriate level of care, apply the current level Alternate Level of Care criteria.

Procedure Reviews. The purpose of Procedure reviews is to evaluate requests for specific interventions, such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), neuropsychological testing, psychological testing, and Applied Behavior Analysis (for children, only). The Procedure reviews for ECT include criteria for both acute (short-term) ECT and for continuation or maintenance ECT when appropriate for a specific age group. Procedure review criteria are applied independently of the level of care criteria.

Review Process

The criteria products are used to perform a primary or secondary review. Typically, a nurse reviewer conducts the primary review using the criteria to determine whether an intervention is appropriate. If the criteria requirements are not met during this first level...
review, or if the reviewer is uncertain about aspects of the review, a secondary review is initiated. A physician, specialist, or supervisor conducts the secondary review. The secondary reviewer carefully reviews the clinical information to determine the appropriateness of the request.

**Adult Psychiatry Criteria**
These criteria are designed for adults 18 through 64 years old, allowing for use for some 17-year olds living independently. The criteria can be used for 3 types of review:

- **Initial Review**
- **Concurrent Review**
- **Procedure Review**

The criteria offer the following levels of care:

- Inpatient
- Observation
- Residential Treatment (Eating Disorder only)
- Partial Hospital
- Intensive Outpatient
- Outpatient

Factors considered when conducting:

- **An initial review** - the reviewer selects either **Immediate safety risk** or **Potential safety risk**. When at least one criterion from **Immediate safety risk** is met, no further information is necessary. When criteria are selected from **Potential safety risk**, the patient’s degree of functioning must be considered: Severe, Moderate, or Mild Impairment. Each degree of functioning will lead to level of care options; the reviewer selects the most appropriate level of care.

- **A concurrent review** - the reviewer applies Concurrent review to validate continued stay in a particular level of care or to determine the next appropriate level of care. To validate continued stay in a particular level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Continued Stay criteria. If criteria are not met, the reviewer applies Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care or refers for secondary review. If a provider is requesting an alternate level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care.

- **A procedure review** - the reviewer applies procedure-specific criteria to determine if the Indications for Use are met or obtains and documents clinical information for secondary review. Procedure review is independent of level of care. The reviewer refers to the Initial and Concurrent Review criteria for level of care decisions.

**Substance Use Disorders & Dual Diagnosis Criteria**
These criteria are designed for both adults 18 and older, allowing for use for some 17-year olds living independently, and adolescents 13 through 17 years old. They include the CIWA-Ar assessment scale.

These criteria can be used for 2 types of review:

- **Initial Review**
- **Concurrent Review**
These criteria offer the following levels of care:

- Inpatient: Detoxification, Rehabilitation, Psychiatric
- Observation
- Ambulatory Detoxification
- Partial Hospital
- Intensive Outpatient
- Outpatient

Factors considered when conducting:

- An initial review - the reviewer selects either Immediate safety risk or Potential safety risk. When at least one criterion from Immediate safety risk is met, no further information is necessary. When criteria are selected from Potential safety risk, the patient's substance of choice or degree of functioning must be considered. For substance of choice, each substance will lead to level of care options; the reviewer selects the most appropriate level of care. For degree of functioning, the reviewer selects Severe, Moderate, or Mild Impairment. Each degree of functioning will lead to level of care options; the reviewer selects the most appropriate level of care.

- A concurrent review - the reviewer applies Concurrent review to validate continued stay in a particular level of care or to determine the next appropriate level of care. To validate continued stay in a particular level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Continued Stay criteria. If criteria are not met, the reviewer applies Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care or refers for secondary review. If a provider is requesting an alternate level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care.

Adolescent Psychiatry Criteria

These criteria are designed for adolescents 13 through 17 years old and can be used for 3 types of review:

- Initial Review
- Concurrent Review
- Procedure Review

The criteria offer the following levels of care:

- Inpatient
- Observation
- Residential Treatment (Eating Disorder only)
- Partial Hospital
- Intensive Outpatient
- Outpatient

Factors considered when conducting:

- An initial review - the reviewer selects either Immediate safety risk or Potential safety risk. When at least one criterion from Immediate safety risk is met, no further information is necessary. When criteria are selected from Potential safety risk, social risk factors must be considered; the reviewer selects Severe, Moderate, or Mild. Each degree of social risk will lead to level of care options; the reviewer selects the most appropriate level of care.

- A concurrent review - the reviewer conducts a concurrent review to validate continued stay in a particular level of care or to determine the next appropriate level of care. To validate continued stay in a particular level of care, the reviewer applies the continued stay criteria. If criteria are met, the reviewer approves the continued stay. If criteria are not met, the reviewer applies Alternate Level of Care criteria to
determine the next appropriate level of care or refers for secondary review. If the clinician request authorization for a different level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Alternate Level of Care criteria.

- **A procedure review** - the reviewer applies procedure-specific criteria to determine if the Indications for Use are met or obtains and documents clinical information for secondary review. Procedure review is independent of level of care. The reviewer refers to the Initial and Concurrent Review criteria for level of care decisions.

### Geriatric Psychiatry Criteria
These criteria are designed for adults 65 years of age and older. These criteria can be used for 3 types of review:

- Initial Review
- Concurrent Review
- Procedure Review

The criteria offer the following levels of care:

- Inpatient
- Observation
- Partial Hospital
- Home Care
- Intensive Outpatient
- Outpatient

Factors considered when conducting:

- **An initial review** - the reviewer selects either Immediate safety risk or Potential safety risk. When at least one criterion from Immediate safety risk is met, no further information is necessary. When criteria are selected from Potential safety risk, the patient's degree of functioning must be considered: Severe, Moderate, or Mild Impairment. Each degree of functioning will lead to level of care options; the reviewer selects the most appropriate level of care.

- **A concurrent review** - the reviewer applies Concurrent review to validate continued stay in a particular level of care or to determine the next appropriate level of care. To validate continued stay in a particular level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Continued Stay criteria. If criteria are not met, the reviewer applies Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care or refers for secondary review. If a provider is requesting an alternate level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care.

- **A procedure review** - the reviewer applies procedure-specific criteria to determine if the Indications for Use are met or obtains and documents clinical information for secondary review. Procedure review is independent of level of care. The reviewer refers to the Initial and Concurrent Review criteria for level of care decisions.

### Child Psychiatry Criteria
These criteria are designed for children 4 through 12 years old. These criteria can be used for 3 types of review:

- Initial Review
- Concurrent Review
- Procedure Review
The criteria offer the following levels of care:

- Inpatient
- Observation
- Partial Hospital
- Intensive Outpatient
- Outpatient

Factors considered when conducting:

- An initial review - the reviewer selects either Immediate safety risk or Potential safety risk. When at least one criterion from Immediate safety risk is met, no further information is necessary. When criteria are selected from Potential safety risk, social risk factors must be considered; the reviewer selects Severe, Moderate, or Mild. Each degree of social risk will lead to level of care options; the reviewer selects the most appropriate level of care.
- A concurrent review - the reviewer applies Concurrent review to validate continued stay in a particular level of care or to determine the next appropriate level of care. To validate continued stay in a particular level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Continued Stay criteria. If criteria are not met, the reviewer applies Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care or refers for secondary review. If a provider is requesting an alternate level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care.
- A procedure review - the reviewer applies procedure-specific criteria to determine if the Indications for Use are met or obtains and documents clinical information for secondary review. Procedure review is independent of level of care. The reviewer refers to the Initial and Concurrent Review criteria for level of care decisions.

Residential & Community-Based Treatment
These criteria are designed for adults 18 through 64 years old, adolescents 13 through 17 years old, and children 6 through 12 years old. The criteria were developed to manage patients with psychiatric and substance use disorders who exhibit chronic or persistent dangerous behavior.

These criteria can be used for 2 types of review:

- Initial Review
- Concurrent Review

Factors considered:

- An initial review - When conducting an initial review, the reviewer selects criteria from Clinical Indications. When criteria are selected, impairments or social risks must be considered. The impairments or social risks will lead to various level-of-care considerations including residential and intensive community-based treatment options. The reviewer selects the most appropriate level of care (depending upon the age-specific subset).
- A concurrent review - the reviewer applies Concurrent review to validate continued stay in a particular level of care or to determine the next appropriate level of care. To validate continued stay in a particular level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Continued Stay criteria. If criteria are not met, the reviewer applies Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care or refers for secondary review. If a provider is requesting an alternate level of care, the reviewer applies the current level Alternate Level of Care criteria to determine the next appropriate level of care.
Criteria Training Programs

McKesson’s comprehensive range of training programs give the new user a working knowledge of InterQual criteria and software, and the experienced user a quick way to get the most from InterQual products and annual enhancements. Training is available on all InterQual Criteria sets. Any questions about training should be directed to the licensee of the InterQual Criteria products.