*Welcome to LLA Reports, a podcast produced by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s office. This podcast is intended to be an oral representation of the written report it highlights and is primarily for the use of the Louisiana Legislature.*

This is Brent McDougall. I’m a senior data analyst with the LLA Performance Audit Services. This episode of LLA Reports focuses on a recently released audit report titled “Oversight of Behavioral Health Provider Requirements – Louisiana Department of Health.”

This report provides the results of our data analytics performance audit of processes the Louisiana Department of Health – or LDH – has for monitoring mental health rehabilitation – or MHR – service providers.

The purpose of this audit was to determine whether individual MHR providers were complying with requirements detailed in the Behavioral Health Provider Manual and informational bulletins.

Overall, we found that LDH could strengthen the behavioral health program by using routine data analyses and/or edit checks to determine if providers are following the program’s requirements.

As part of our audit, we reviewed Medicaid encounter data from December 1, 2015, to September 12, 2020, and found approximately $1.48 million in payments that may have violated behavioral health program requirements.

We found that between December 2015 and August 2020, approximately $456,000 in payments were made for more than 4,200 encounters in which an individual received MHR services while in an inpatient hospital setting.

According to LDH’s provider manual, services such as psychosocial rehabilitation, crisis intervention, and community psychiatric support and treatment may not be provided by an outside MHR provider while the recipient is located in an inpatient setting and are not to be billed separately to Medicaid.

For example, we found that a provider was paid almost $22,000 for services allegedly provided to a Medicaid recipient at her home. However, the recipient was in an inpatient setting at the time, which could mean that the services were not actually provided.

In addition, between December 2015 and March 2020, the audit identified about $807,000 in payments for more than 10,000 instances in which two different providers were paid for providing the same services to the same Medicaid recipient on the same day.

Under the behavioral health program’s rules, a Medicaid recipient may only receive services from one provider at a time.

We also identified almost $220,000 in payments for more than 2,500 encounters between March 2020 and September 2020, in which providers did not properly code MHR services delivered via telehealth.

As a result of our audit, we made two recommendations to LDH.

The first recommendation was that LDH should set up routine analyses and/or edit checks for claims submitted by providers to identify when providers fail to comply behavioral health program requirements.

The second recommendation was that LDH should recoup any improper payments identified through the analyses in this report, such as payments made to two different providers who billed for the same service for the same recipient on the same day or payments made to providers who billed for services provided in the home while the recipient was in an inpatient setting.

In its response to our report, which is detailed in the report appendix, LDH agreed with both recommendations.

*We hope you found this podcast informative, and that you’ll follow future episodes of LLA Reports.*

*This podcast was created as part of the audit report just discussed and is intended primarily for the use of the Louisiana Legislature. Both the full report and the podcast can be found on the LLA’s website at* [*www.lla.la.gov*](http://www.lla.la.gov)*.*

*Thank you for listening.*