



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Solicitation for Public Comments on the Development of an Independent Accreditation System for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Expansion (CCBHC-E) Grant Recipients

AGENCY: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

ACTION: Request for information.

SUMMARY: SAMHSA is seeking public comment to inform the development, implementation, and oversight of an independent accreditation system for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Expansion (CCBHC-E) grant recipients. SAMHSA intends to establish a process for evaluating and approving accrediting bodies, transition certain CCBHC-E grant recipients to independent accreditation, develop a federal oversight framework, and provide technical assistance to states, providers, and accrediting organizations. Input received through this request for information will help SAMHSA design an accreditation system that promotes quality, reduces administrative burden, and supports consistent national standards.

DATES: Written comments will be accepted through 11:59PM EST on [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: Comments can be submitted in the following ways:

- Electronic submissions can be filed online at <http://www.regulations.gov> by following the “*Instructions for Public Comments*” section below. Comments submitted electronically, including attachments, will be posted to the docket unchanged. Evidence and information supporting your comment can be submitted as attachments. Please provide your contact information or organization name on the web-based form for follow up.
- Written comments can be emailed to: CCBHCAccreditation@samhsa.hhs.gov

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: CCBHCAccreditation@samhsa.hhs.gov or 771-245-4179

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the fiscal year 2026 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill¹, Congress directed SAMHSA to “examine and approve accreditation products that certify CCBHCs in having met requirements as established by SAMHSA. CCBHC grantees should receive independent accreditation from an approved entity as part of participation under this program. Funding included under this program is permitted for grantees’ use to obtain any such required independent accreditation in lieu of self-attestation for meeting the CCBHC requirements as a part of reducing paperwork and

¹ Through reference to Senate Report 119-55 (<https://www.congress.gov/committee-report/119th-congress/senate-report/55/1?outputFormat=pdf>)

administrative burden, and SAMHSA shall consider the costs of accreditation when establishing funding levels for clinics under this grant. The Committee further permits SAMHSA to use funds under this program to establish the accreditation process and expand the audiences eligible to receive training and technical assistance, to include (but not limited to) demonstration CCBHCs and CCBHCs participating in a State-led implementation effort under a Medicaid State Plan Amendment, waiver, or other Medicaid authority.”

SAMHSA is currently developing a national framework for independent CCBHC accreditation which is expected to:

1. Evaluate and approve independent accrediting bodies through a formal application and review process to ensure alignment with SAMHSA’s established standards.
2. Transition CCBHC-E grant recipients who are not certified by their state under a Medicaid CCBHC program from self-attestation to independent accreditation.
3. Establish a structured system for ongoing federal oversight and coordination of approved accrediting bodies to ensure continued adherence to federal standards and to address disputes, appeals and conflicting determinations.
4. Provide targeted technical assistance and implementation support to states, CCBHCs, accrediting bodies, and other stakeholders to ensure effective operation of the CCBHC accreditation system.

SAMHSA seeks public input on the standards, processes, oversight mechanisms, timing, and supports needed to implement this accreditation system effectively. SAMHSA invites comments on the below areas. Respondents may address any or all topics and provide additional information beyond the questions listed.

Standards and Requirements for Accrediting Bodies

- What elements should SAMHSA include in the standards governing accrediting bodies and their CCBHC accreditation processes?
- What specific aspects of the CCBHC model should be emphasized in accreditation?
- What expectations should SAMHSA establish for accrediting bodies in terms of their processes, basis for decision-making, fees and time frames for communications?
- What staffing, qualifications, and expertise should be required for accrediting bodies and/or for individuals conducting accreditation reviews?

Accreditation Process, Oversight and Compliance

- How can accreditation support continuous quality improvement at both the clinic and state levels?
- How can SAMHSA reduce administrative burden and cost for CCBHCs and states while supporting efficient and high-quality accreditation processes?
- How should SAMHSA structure oversight of accrediting bodies, including monitoring, reporting and coordination with states and providers?
- What data infrastructure would help support a federal accreditation system?
- How should SAMHSA approach appeals, disputes, or conflicting determinations between state certification and independent accreditation findings?
- How should SAMHSA address situations where CCBHCs are found out of compliance through accreditation?
 - a. Under what circumstances should SAMHSA prioritize remediation and within what timeframes?
 - b. Under what circumstances should accrediting bodies deny accreditation?
 - c. Should failure to achieve or maintain accreditation affect CCBHC-E grant funding, and if so, how?

- How should designated collaborating organizations be evaluated and included in accreditation site visits?

Timing and Logistics of Implementation

- What considerations should inform the timing of SAMHSA's application and approval process for accrediting bodies?
- How much time would providers need to prepare for accreditation, and what factors should SAMHSA consider when determining launch timelines?
- What timing considerations should apply to CCBHC-E grant recipients not certified by their states?
- Should SAMHSA consider provisional attestation, phased implementation, or other transition strategies for introducing accreditation?

State Coordination

- How can SAMHSA best partner with CCBHC-certifying states during accreditation implementation?
- How should SAMHSA address scenarios where state certification decisions differ from accreditation findings?

Technical Assistance and Support

- What technical assistance and support would be most helpful for CCBHCs, states, accrediting bodies, and other stakeholders?
- What forms of TA-such as consultation, webinars, readiness tools, or checklists- would be most valuable?

Additional Feedback

- What additional considerations, concerns, or recommendations should SAMHSA consider in developing and implementing an independent CCBHC accreditation system?
- Are there experiences or examples from accreditation or certification processes in other sectors that may inform SAMHSA's approach?

Responses to this request for information will inform SAMHSA's development of standards, processes, oversight mechanisms, and technical assistance strategies for an independent CCBHC accreditation system. SAMHSA may use the information received to develop future guidance, program requirements, or related policy materials.

Carlos Castillo,

Program Management Officer, Committee Management Office.

[FR Doc. 2026-12883 Filed: 6/25/2026 8:45 am; Publication Date: 6/26/2026]