



NC-TOPPS Frequently Asked Questions

What is NC-TOPPS?

NC-TOPPS is a web-based system for gathering outcome and performance data on behalf of mental health and substance abuse consumers who are receiving a qualifying service in North Carolina's public system of treatment services. NC-TOPPS was launched in 1997 as a partnership between the federal government and the state and in 2005, NC TOPPS was moved to a web-based format.

How does NC-TOPPS work?

NC-TOPPS is based on face-to-face interaction between a consumer and a QP with the objective of enhancing the clinical assessment process and providing information for the consumer's treatment plan. **Initial**, **Update** and **Episode Completion** Interviews are designed to assist in assessing the effectiveness of treatment. The **Initial Interview** is designed to gather information on consumer demographics and pretreatment behaviors. This is required to be done face to face within the first or second treatment visit. **Update Interviews** (conducted at **three, six, twelve months, and bi-annually thereafter**) gather information on consumer status changes and treatment outcomes

How to start using NC-TOPPS?

Go to the NC-TOPPS main website: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas/providers/NCTOPPS/> . Click on "NCTOPPS 2.1 Website Submission". Click on "Create NC-TOPPS User Profile". Enter your name and unique email address. Follow on-screen instructions to select LME-MCO(s) and provider agency(ies). After your request is completed, the system will prompt you to create a secure NC-TOPPS account. To ensure the security of your account, you will create a password and answer security questions. A username will be assigned to you at this time. Your new user request will be emailed to your provider agency Superuser or LME-MCO Superuser. The Superuser will approve or deny your request and you will be notified by email.

What are Super Users?

Superusers are individuals who have oversight responsibilities for their LME-MCO or provider agency. Every provider agency is required to have a Superuser. Superusers are able to track NC-TOPPS submissions and due dates for their LME-MCO or provider agency, change a consumer's QP, and manage user enrollment requests. Superusers have access to the same NC TOPPS features as QPs- the Interview Search option and the Updates Needed option, but they also have access to other features.

How do I become a superuser?

If you are already an approved NC-TOPPS user for your agency, you should contact the NC-TOPPS Help Desk to request a Superuser Enrollment Form. Or the Partners BHM Superuser also has Superuser Enrollment forms you may request. After it is filled out-you can scan the form and email it back to nctopps@ncsu.edu . New users for an agency need to enroll in the web-based system as a QP and be approved BEFORE they can apply to become a superuser.

How do I manage our agency's user requests?

When you get an email to "Approve a new user", log in with your current NC-TOPPS username and password. Click on the Locations tab to select LME/MCO and provider in the blue bar near the top of the page. Once you choose the appropriate location, the Superuser Tools tab will appear next to the Locations tab. Click on the Superuser Tools tab and click on "**Manage User Requests.**" You will see names of prospective users in your User Management Request Queue. If your queue is empty, no users are waiting to be approved. You will **select Approve or Reject** (on the **far right** at the end of the row). The user will go into Items for **Approval or Items for Rejection. Click the "Confirm" button** at the bottom of the page to **save** the approvals or rejections.

How does a superuser remove users?

As the agency Superuser, you should always remove users when that staff persons leaves your agency. Click on the Superuser Tools tab and click on "**Remove Users.**" You will see a list of the Active Users at the provider agency you have selected. Find the row with the **username** you wish to remove. At the far-right end of the row, click on the "**Remove" button.** Click the "**Save Changes**" button at the bottom of the page.

How do superusers change a consumer from one QP to another?

Click on "Change Consumer's QP". Under the "Episodes of Care" listing, check the box next to the consumer you want to modify. At the bottom of the screen, select the New Qualified Professional you would like the selected consumer to be changed to. Click the "Modify Episode" button at the bottom of the page to save the changes.

How do you find an incomplete interview?

Click on "Manage Episodes of Care". You will find the interview that was started under the "Episodes of Care" box that has all the Incomplete Interviews. Select **the row** of the consumer (**not 'View'**) and then get to the interview by **going to the second box** labeled "List of Interviews for Selected Consumer". You **may need to scroll down** in the second box to get to the interview that needs to be resumed. Select "Resume" to finish and submit the interview. NOTE: The user can follow these same instructions under their login to get to the incomplete interview.

What is a CNDS (Common Name Data Services) Number for NC-TOPPS?

For Medicaid recipients, the CNDS number will be the same as the Medicaid ID. For individuals not enrolled in Medicaid, Partners will need to provide the CNDS number when an individual is admitted to an NC-TOPPS required service.

If the individual is Medicaid-eligible, the CNDS number IS the Medicaid ID number. If he/she is IPRS only, NC Tracks creates a CNDS number, and the LME/MCO contact person will assist with the number. To obtain the number, please send a confidential email through the ZixMail portal to **Cindy Combs** <mailto:ccombs@partnersbhm.org>. In the email, include the individual's name, social security number and date of birth. You may also contact Cindy at 336-527-3209.

What needs to be done to prepare for interviewing consumers?

The NC-TOPPS Interviews include common information generally collected as part of developing and revising a mental health and substance abuse consumer's treatment plan. It is important that the QPs are familiar with the Interview questions prior to contact with a consumer. Careful preparation will increase the chances of engaging the consumer and completing NC-TOPPS Interviews with accurate information. Prior to sitting down with a consumer, a QP should

practice with the various NC-TOPPS Interview items. Sign in as **username-training & password-training** to practice. **All items** in the interview are required to be answered before one can submit the interview. There are also certain items on the Update and Episode Completion Interview which are important in determining consumer outcomes that are required **to be asked directly** to the consumer either in-person or by telephone **within two weeks** of the NC-TOPPS interview.

How to submit an NC-TOPPS?

To submit an interview, go to the NC-TOPPS main website:

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas/providers/NCTOPPS/> and click on “NCTOPPS 2.1 Website Submission.” Login with your username and password, go to the Locations tab and select the appropriate LME-MCO and provider agency location. Once a location has been selected, the **Website Submission tab will appear** and you can **select “Start Initial Interview”** to start an Initial Interview or select **“Manage Episodes of Care”** to start: an **Update, Episode Completion, or Recovery Follow-Up** Interview.

What are some of the features available to Qualified Professionals (QPs)?

QPs have access to **interview search, updates needed list and individual report.**

Interview Search allows the user to search for interviews by various criteria; such as, consumer information (consumer record number, QP username, DOB, consumer initials), gender, interview status, date started and submitted range, consumer group, and interview type and location. Interview search results can be printed or exported into an Excel document.

Updates Needed List assists in tracking the date that updates are due for a consumer.

Individual Report displays select NC-TOPPS items from the Initial Interview and the two most recent updates, if completed, for a consumer. This report can be shared with the consumer in Person Centered Planning (PCP), if desired.

What are Data Entry Users (DEUs)?

Data Entry Users (DEUs) are non-QP staff within provider agencies who are allowed to enter NC-TOPPS interview data on behalf of QPs. (The QP must sign the NC-TOPPS form. The original interview with their signature must be placed in the chart). All requests for DEU status are emailed to the Superuser, who will subsequently approve or deny requests.

On the Authorization for Use Disclosure and Exchange of Protected Health Information for NC-TOPPS form, which dates should be placed in the section “Data covers the time period of _____ to _____”?

The Authorization for Use Disclosure and Exchange of Protected Health Information for NC-TOPPS form is used to authorize the transfer of a consumer’s NC-TOPPS history from the previous provider to the new provider. The date in the first blank is the initial interview date and the second blank is the word present or current date. The initial interview date can be obtained from the previous provider or the LME-MCO email address, nctoppsquestions@partnersbhm.org.

If the consumer is being transferred to a provider outside of North Carolina, do I submit an episode completion interview?

Yes, if the consumer is being transferred to a provider outside of the state, you need to complete and episode completion interview for the consumer.

If the consumer is seeing multiple provider agencies, which agency is responsible for completing the NC-TOPPS interviews?

When a consumer has more than one qualifying service, the responsibility for the NC-TOPPS interviews is determined by a hierarchy of services based on age-disability. The hierarchy is outlined below:

| Adult SAMH | Child/Adolescent SAMH |
|---|---|
| Residential Services | Residential - PRTF |
| Partial Hospitalization | Partial Hospitalization |
| Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) | Multisystemic Therapy Services (MST) |
| Substance Abuse Comprehensive Outpatient Treatment (SACOT) | Intensive In-Home Services (IIH) |
| Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Treatment (SAIOP) | Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Treatment (SAIOP) |
| Community Support Team (CST) | Child and Adolescent Day Treatment |
| Opioid Treatment | Residential Services (except PRTF) & Therapeutic Foster Care Services |
| Supported Employment or Long Term Vocational Support Services | Supported Employment or Long Term Vocational Support Services |
| Periodic (State Funded SA Only): Consumer Group Family | Periodic (State Funded SA Only): Consumer Group Family |

Priority for the responsible provider agency is in hierarchical order so that if a consumer is receiving two or more of the required services during a given period, the service that is in highest order on the table is responsible for NC-TOPPS. As services change within an episode of care, the NC-TOPPS record will need to be transferred to the provider agency providing the next highest service. Only one set of NC-TOPPS Interviews is completed for each consumer during a particular episode of care.

When do update interviews need to be completed?

An Update Interview must be completed within two weeks prior or two weeks after the appropriate Update is due. If an Update is not completed on time, it is still required to be completed 2 weeks before the due date to 30 days after the interview is due. If an Update is missed and another Update is now due, only the current Update due can be completed in the NC-TOPPS system. For example, if a 3-month Update is missed and a 6-month Update is now due, only the 6-month Update can be completed.

When do episode completion interviews need to be completed?

An episode completion interview must be submitted when a consumer has successfully completed treatment (QP should conduct an in-person interview with consumer just prior to the end of services), been discharged at program initiative, refused treatment, not received any services for 60 days (check "Did not return as scheduled within 60 days), changed to service not required for NC-TOPPS, moved out of area or changed to different LME-MCO, been incarcerated or institutionalized, died or other.

How do you complete an update or episode completion interview if you do not have access to internet or are working off-site?

If the QP provides services at a location where internet access is not available, QPs may use printable versions to gather NC-TOPPS information on site. This information must then be entered into the web-based system by the QP or Data Entry User (DEU). Printable versions are available on the NC-TOPPS website on the Important User Links page (<https://nctopps.ncdmh.net/dev/GettingStartedWithNCTOPPS.asp>). Click, "Locate what you need to get started using NC-TOPPS".

Where do you find the NC-TOPPS Frequently Asked Questions, NC-TOPPS Quick Start Guide, NC-TOPPS Superuser Tools Guide, Printable Interview Forms, and NC-TOPPS Resource Guide?

These documents can be found at <https://nctopps.ncdmh.net/dev/GettingStartedWithNCTOPPS.asp> .

How do you get trained for NC-TOPPS?

Partners BHM provides a quarterly training to providers. Registration for the training can be found at this link: <https://www.partnersbhm.org/event-calendar/>

How do you receive additional technical assistance and training support?

Partners BHM established a Partners NC-TOPPS Questions email address, nctoppsquestions@partnersbhm.org . (Please use only consumer MR#'s in emails-no identifying information)

Where do I find the NC-TOPPS Guidelines?

The NC-TOPPS Guidelines can be found at <https://nctopps.ncdmh.net/dev/GettingStartedWithNCTOPPS.asp> . The NC-TOPPS Implementation Guidelines (Updated July 1, 2016) states that NC-TOPPS Interviews must be included in the consumer's record and the consumer is expected to sign the copy of the submitted interview. (Adults and Adolescents can sign their own, but the child interview needs to be signed by parent or guardian). When the consumer's provider agency changes, the QP at the new provider agency must notify the LME-MCO. The Initial Interview should be completed during the first or second treatment visit as part of the development of the consumer's treatment plan.