



# MENTAL HEALTH BULLETIN

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA • DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

DATE OF ISSUE

8/15/91

EFFECTIVE DATE

Immediately

NUMBER

SMH-91-04

SUBJECT

State Mental Hospital Admission of Involuntarily  
Committed Individuals

BY

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## SCOPE:

Bureaus of Mental Health Area Operations  
State Mental Hospitals  
County MH/MR Programs  
Private Psychiatric Hospitals  
General Hospitals (Psychiatric Units)

## PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Bulletin is to issue a more detailed version of  
Mental Health Bulletin No. 5100-88-01.

## BACKGROUND:

In several geographic areas throughout the state, individuals  
involuntarily committed to a state mental hospital are remaining in a  
community general hospital psychiatric unit or private psychiatric hospital  
for a period of time beyond the date of commitment to a state mental  
hospital. This situation creates a backlog in the community hospital  
psychiatric service system and, in some cases, has resulted in significant  
loss of Medical Assistance revenue for affected hospitals.

Office of Medical Assistance regulations deny reimbursement to a  
community general hospital or private psychiatric hospital on the effective  
date of a commitment to a state mental hospital and thereafter (MA  
Regulations at 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 1163, Subchapter B, §1163.455 (a)(11)  
and Chapter 1151, §1151.48 (a)(14)).

## POLICY:

To manage treatment resources more effectively and to assure  
adequate Medical Assistance reimbursement to community general and private  
psychiatric hospitals for days of active treatment provided to Medical  
Assistance eligible persons with mental illness, appropriate action must be  
taken by all affected parties. The following procedures should be followed:

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Shirley Dumpman (412) 257-6805

George Kopchick (215) 740-3469

Bruce Darney (717) 731-7108

(1) Community general and private psychiatric hospital staff should notify, via telephone, appropriate county MH/MR staff, (county administrator or designated agency) upon each Medical Assistance recipient's admission to the community general or private psychiatric hospital. (This information may be released to county administrators per mental health procedures established at 55 Pa Code Chapter 5100.32 (a)(5) which discusses nonconsensual release of information to county administrators.)

(2) Immediately upon determination of the need for long-term psychiatric care, a referral package should be sent to the state mental hospital so that it is received at least two days prior to the date of the scheduled commitment hearing. (A list of the items to be included in the referral package is attached - Appendix A.) The County MH/MR Administrator or designated agency should be notified by the community general or private psychiatric hospital of the patient's need for long-term psychiatric care.

**For Philadelphia Hospitals Only** - If the hospital or hospital unit determines that a patient is appropriate for commitment to an extended acute care psychiatric unit, the hospital must contact the extended acute care psychiatric unit to secure a projected admission date and follow the procedures outlined in this Bulletin.

(3) The state mental hospital and the community general or private psychiatric hospital will agree upon the date that the patient will be admitted to the state hospital. The state mental hospital staff shall notify the community general or private psychiatric hospital of the agreed upon date of admission prior to the patient's scheduled hearing date.

If the state mental hospital fails to give the referring hospital a projected admission date, the referring hospital must notify the Bureau of Mental Health Area Operations (see Appendix B) whose responsibility it is to resolve the problem.

(4) The community general or private psychiatric hospital shall notify the hearing officer of the date of availability of a state mental hospital bed.

(5) The hearing officer shall conduct the hearing in a timely fashion in accordance with the timeframes required by the Mental Health Procedures Act of 1976, as amended 1978. Any commitment order should contain the agreed upon admission date to the state mental hospital.

(6) The community general or private psychiatric hospital shall maintain appropriate documentation of the continuance of active psychiatric treatment in the medical record until the patient is discharged to the state mental hospital. (Please refer to MA Regulations at 55 Pa. Code, Chapters 1101, 1101.51 (d)(e) et. seq. for the description of appropriate documentation of the continuance of active treatment.)

(7) The referring hospital must also continue to request certification of additional inpatient days through the Medical Assistance Program's Concurrent Hospital Review (CHR) Process so long as the patient's hospital stay is medically necessary. The referring hospital must not bill the county MH/MR Program based on the assumption that the delay in discharge to a state mental hospital will automatically result in denial of certification by the CHR Unit.

(8) If, during the waiting period, the patient's condition improves to the extent that inpatient hospital care is no longer necessary, the referring hospital must discharge the patient promptly. In this case, the referring hospital shall notify the state mental hospital that the pending admission is cancelled.

(9) If the projected date for the patient's transfer arrives and the bed is not available, the transferring hospital must request a new date from the state mental hospital and the state mental hospital must provide it. If the state mental hospital does not do so, the transferring hospital must follow the procedures outlined under paragraph (3). The referring hospital should seek an amended court order to cover the new projected date of admission to the state mental hospital before the patient's discharge.

It is necessary to revise policy and procedures to assure the management of treatment resources more effectively in the admission of involuntarily committed individuals to the state mental hospital system. When the preceding policy and procedures are followed to include:

- (1) The specific date of admission to the state mental hospital appropriately documented on the court commitment;
- (2) The continuance of active treatment adequately documented in the patient's medical record; and,
- (3) The actual discharge of the patient to the state mental hospital occurs on the date documented on the court commitment,

then, Medical Assistance should be able to reimburse the community general or private psychiatric facility for all the eligible days that the MA-eligible patient is hospitalized.

Obsolete Bulletin OMB 5100-88-01

Items to be Included in Referral Package

Materials accompanying a patient on admission to State Hospital under Section 304/305/306 of the Mental Health Procedures Act of 1976, as amended in 1978, shall include:

1. Signed and completed 304/305/306 commitment papers
2. Psychiatric Assessment
3. Medical Assessment
4. Current Medications
5. All laboratory and X-ray results
6. Consultant's Reports
7. Social History with special emphasis on Family Assessment and Discharge Resources
8. Psychological Assessments (if available)
9. BSU Activity
10. Assessments from other clinical disciplines involved in the patient's treatment.

**APPENDIX B**

**Bureau of Southeastern Operations**  
Office of Mental Health  
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**Bureau of Northeastern Operations**  
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