

Medical Clearance Guidelines

In today's mental health system, there has been an increase of utilization of community-based mental health services. This has resulted in more Regional Mental Health Institutes (RMHI) referrals coming directly from the community.

RMHIs are structured to deal with chronic and persistent mental illness in a population that is presumed to be relatively medically stable. While, we have a physician available on-site, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to deal with both medical and behavioral issues, we are limited in the medical services we can provide. Most serious illnesses demand expertise beyond the capabilities of the clinical staff. Therefore, when determining the medical stability of individuals referred to State RMHIs, we continue to rely on the local emergency room as our primary resource. We recognize that these same emergency rooms are under increase pressure to avoid inappropriate referrals and reduce the provision of routine healthcare service.

The RMHIs are committed to reducing needless referrals to these emergency rooms. In an attempt to do this, we have identified certain individuals that can be referred directly to the RMHIs for assessment without medical screening.

❖ INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR DIRECT REFERRAL TO RMHIs

- Under Age 55
 - No known health issues or medical complaint and prior history of psychiatric treatment
 - Patients transferring from a Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) with or without chronic medical conditions that have been stable for more than 48 hours.
 - No report or indication of alcohol or Benzodiazepines use within twenty-four (24) hours of the referral and absence of any withdrawal symptoms
 - No recent history of head trauma or loss of consciousness
 - No history of recent drug overdose

❖ INDIVIDUALS WITH KNOWN MENTAL HEALTH AND A KNOWN CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION

- Who May Be Eligible for a Direct Referral;
 - Based on a known history of compliances with treatment
 - Vital signs within normal limits
 - Blood glucose level for diabetics within the last hour
 - Individual with known history of substance abuse would require urine drug screening and breathalyzer

❖ **INDIVIDUALS REFERRED FROM JAILS**

- Breathalyzers can be used as an alternative for blood alcohol testing when patients are referred from a non-ER setting
- Referrals from correctional settings should not be routinely referred for medical clearance, but should be done on an individual basis. Utilize same criteria used for those coming from the community

Individuals referred for medical clearance should receive diagnostic testing based upon the emergency provider's determination of need. In order for the RMHIs to expedite the referral process, it would be helpful if the following were obtained:

- Vital Signs
- Urine Drug Screen
- Complete Blood Count
- Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP)
- Pregnancy Test
- Blood Alcohol
- Drug Levels i.e., Lithium, Depakote, etc.

The requesting RMHI will provide in writing upon request, the rationale for any other diagnostic testing.