MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES BULLETIN

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

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NOVEMBER 5, 2004	**Immediately**	**SMH-04-02**

SUBJECT

EMPLOYEE and contractors use of Personal Pagers and Cellular Telephones

BY:

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Deputy Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

SCOPE:
All employees and all contractors who are employed or perform a service at Pennsylvnia Hospitals and South Mountain Restoration Center.

PURPOSE:
To establish and institute standard guidelines for employees and contractors regarding the use of personal pagers and cellular telephones during assigned work hours.

POLICY:
Pennsylvania's State Mental Hospitals are expected to provide services in a therapeutic environment where staff and patient safety and attention to care and treatment are paramount. All employees and contractors are expected to serve as positive role models for each other and patients and ensure their duties are performed without the interference of personal pagers and/or cellular telephones.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Director, Bureau of Hospital Operations
1st Floor, Beechmont Building, P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105
717-705-8153

TRAINING:

All newly employed staff and all contractors shall receive an orientation to this Policy. All current employees and all contractors shall review this policy at least annually.

Note: For the purpose of this policy, employees and contractors shall be collectively referred to as "staff" unless otherwise designated.

1. Staff shall conduct their assigned duties and responsibilities in a professional manner at all times without the distraction of personal pagers and /or cellular telephones.

2. During assigned work hours, staff is prohibited from utilizing personal pagers and/or cellular telephones while in patient areas, transporting a patient or interacting with a patient. Staff shall not have their personal pager and/or cellular telephone secured with their personal belongings or in their vehicle.
   (See Forensic Section for specifics relating to Forensic Units.)

3. During assigned break times and meal periods, staff may utilize their personal pager and/or cellular telephone, off the patient areas, and away from any patients. If staff are using their cellular phones on the grounds they should use it away from areas where patients gather.

4. The hospital shall permit reasonable use of telephones for staff personal business as outlined in the hospital policy: "Use of Commonwealth Owned Telephone System."

5. Staff found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and a contractor may have their contract withdrawn.

6. If staff are going to a remote area or taking patients away from the hospital and a Commonwealth phone is not available they are permitted to utilize a personal cellular supervisor's phone.
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FORENSIC UNITS

1. Employees who are assigned to work in the Forensic Units are not permitted to bring their personal pagers and/or cellular telephones into the Forensic unit. These items may be left in their vehicle to be handed in at the sally port.

2. All of the above statements apply to Forensic Employees.

RELATED POLICIES:

Refer to the Governor's Office of Administration's memorandum dated March 15, 2004 regarding the use of: Camera, picture, and video cellular telephones in the workplace.