



## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES BULLETIN

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA \* DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

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SUBJECT

Administrative Transfers between State Mental Hospitals

Civil Sections

BY

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**Scope:** State Mental Health Hospitals  
County MH/MR Administrators

**Purpose:** To establish a uniform policy for administrative transfers between the civil sections of State Mental Hospitals.

**Policy:** Administrative transfers between State Mental Hospitals shall be accomplished in the most efficacious manner possible taking into consideration the individual consumer's treatment needs and recovery plan. The civil involuntary commitment process dictates the level of care needed for treatment, with the most restrictive level being the state hospital setting. As Commonwealth operated and owned facilities, each hospital's level of care is considered equal. Therefore, when a consumer is committed to a state hospital, that level of care is considered commensurate in all OMHSAS corporate-operated psychiatric facilities.

Administrative transfers can occur for the following reasons: closure or consolidation of a specific State mental hospital; compassionate transfers requested by the consumer and/or family; enactment of a hospital's disaster/emergency response plan. To facilitate the administrative transfer, the following action steps shall be initiated:

1. All requests for administrative transfers shall be reviewed by the involved hospital Chief Executive Officers in conjunction with the Director, Bureau of Hospital Operations. The final approval/decision rests with the Director, Bureau of Hospital Operations.
2. The involved County MH/MR Administrators shall be notified by the hospital Chief Executive Officers (or designees) of the planned transfer and the rationale.
3. The family, next-of-kin, and/or significant other shall be notified of the planned administrative transfer with the individual consumer's consent.
4. The Pennsylvania Protection & Advocacy shall be notified by the transferring hospital of all administrative transfers.
5. Documentation of the notifications made shall be entered in the consumer's medical record by the involved staff member.
6. Administrative transfers, once approved, shall be accomplished in a time frame conducive to the individual consumer's needs and bed availability at the receiving hospital.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO: Bureau of Hospital Operations, P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, Pa. 17105 –Phone # (717) 705-8152.

7. The attending psychiatrist at the sending hospital shall write a physician's order for administrative transfer to the receiving hospital. The attending psychiatrist at the receiving hospital shall also document the acceptance of the consumer as an administrative transfer in the initial documentation.
8. The original county of residence shall remain on the current commitment to the state hospital
9. The entire medical record from the sending facility, along with the consumer's personal belongings, shall accompany the consumer. The receiving facility shall then utilize the records as their treatment document, completing updates/assessments/revisions according to hospital policies, OMHSAS mandates, and accreditation/certification agency guidelines.
10. The current commitment order shall be accepted by the receiving facility, and it shall be considered a continuation of the order from the sending facility. If there is a need for an additional commitment proceeding, the petition shall be filed with the original county of residence, who shall conduct the commitment hearing. The current treatment facility shall be identified as the location for all future court orders. Voluntary commitment orders shall be updated to reflect the receiving hospital and signed by the consumer accordingly.
11. When the following conditions exist for involuntarily committed consumers:
  - a. the receiving hospital is significantly farther away from home than the sending hospital, and
  - b. the increased distance will materially affect relations with visiting friends and family, and
  - c. the consumer objects to the transfer,the receiving hospital shall be designated on the pre-transfer 305 or 306 commitment order.

**Reference:** Mental Health Procedures Act, 55§5100.90