

	STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL POLICY COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES		
	NUMBER: SMH-P-08-02	ISSUE DATE: 3/20/08	EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/01/08
SUBJECT: Therapeutic Leave Approval Process		BY:  Aidan Altenor Director, Bureau of Community and Hospital Operations	

SCOPE: State Mental Health Hospitals (excludes consumers served in Forensic centers)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to institute uniform guidelines for approving therapeutic leaves. The State Mental Hospitals (SMHs) shall adopt and implement the attached guidelines related to the review and approval of therapeutic leaves. All SMHs will revise their policies, procedures, and practices accordingly. A therapeutic leave is any approved time a consumer is away from the hospital without staff that is part of a treatment plan designed to help the consumer reestablish community and/or family contact.

BACKGROUND:

The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) supports the principles of Recovery and assures that all treatment be provided in the most appropriate and least restrictive environment consistent with the safety of all whom we serve, welfare of staff, and the community. Therapeutic Leaves are an important part of many individuals' recovery. The Therapeutic Leave Approval Process is intended to unify existing policies and procedures on therapeutic leaves by providing an organizational tool and history in the form of a record for review.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:
 Director, Bureau of Community and Hospital Operations, DPW-OMHSAS,
 P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675 or phone 717-705-8151.

DISCUSSION:

The Therapeutic Leave Approval Process serves the following purposes:

- Provides administrative review, monitoring and approval of any Therapeutic Leaves approved for a Consumer.
- Provides for monitoring of successful/unsuccessful leaves that take place.
- Provides immediate information of the whereabouts of any Consumer who is out on Therapeutic Leave.

Staff Responsibilities:

1. Anytime a Therapeutic Leave is requested the Therapeutic Leave (TL) request will be entered into the TL tracker system by the unit social work staff or other designated treatment staff for last minute requests.
2. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designee** reviews the request and makes a determination to approve or deny the Therapeutic Leave based on recommendation from team and treatment team psychiatrist, individual's present clinical condition and individual's history with therapeutic leaves. A second opinion may be provided by Chief Medical Officer (CMO) or Supervising Psychiatrist.
3. Family/Friend will be asked how the visit went. Staff who sign the consumer back into the hospital will document in the medical record utilizing the attached form the family's perception of the visit. The form will document if any medication that should have been ingested was returned, if there is any suspicion of abuse, if any individual appeared intoxicated upon return, if individual used any alcohol on the leave, if individual used any substance other than what was prescribed for the leave such as over the counter medications, street drugs, other prescriptions medications, or if any other incident occurred during the Therapeutic Leave.
4. Therapeutic Leaves with unexpected outcome (e.g., AWOL, overdose) are highlighted in the tracker system for future reference.
5. The documented therapeutic leaves can be used to demonstrate the Consumer's capacity to manage their personal affairs while they are on leave and support their discharge plans with the county.

**Note: (designee is either Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing Executive, Chief Social Rehabilitative Executive or Administrator on Call for holidays of weekends)

TL Tracker System:

All Treatment staff will be trained on how to use the Therapeutic Leave Tracker system. All new treatment staff will receive an orientation on how to use the tracker system.

Therapeutic Leave Tracker System: Tracker is an Excel Spreadsheet that is set up on a shared server with varying levels of access granted as appropriate to Executive Staff, Nursing Supervisors/Nurse Managers, Social Workers and other designated treatment staff. The information includes:

- Consumer name
- Unit
- Privilege level
- Team approval
- CEO/designee approval
- Therapeutic Leave start date
- Therapeutic Leave start time
- Therapeutic Leave end date
- Therapeutic Leave end time
- Days=Duration of Therapeutic Leave
- Responsible person (some Consumers may sign themselves out)
- Relationship
- Address of the location of the Therapeutic Leave
- Phone number and alternate phone number
- County
- Therapeutic Leave reason
- Risk profile date
- Restrictions: such as history of abuse at home, PFA against family member
- Outcome of TL: Highlight if unexpected outcome

Please see the second appendix for an example of the Therapeutic Leave Tracker System.

Appendix 1

THERAPEUTIC LEAVE (PASS)

Individuals Name: _____ Date: _____ Time Left: _____

Date of Return: _____ Time of return: _____ Consumer # _____

- 1) How was the visit?
- 2) Can you explain some of the strengths the individual showed during the visit?
- 3) Did the individual show any unusual behaviors during the visit?
- 4) Did the individual experience any side effects to medication as drowsiness, nausea, dizziness or other?
- 5) Did the individual drink alcoholic beverages during the visit? If yes, what was consumed and how much?
- 6) Did the individual take any medication other than prescribed (street drugs, over the counter drugs) during the visit? If yes, what was consumed and how much?
- 7) Did the individual violate any laws during the visit?
- 8) Are you returning unused medications from this visit? (*Why are medications being returned? Was there any difficulty giving or taking the medication?*)
- 9) Do you have any other comments or concerns that can be addressed by the treatment team?

**State Hospital
Temporary Leave Tracking Report**

Address	City	Phone	County	TL Reason	Risk Asses. Date	Restrictions	Outcome of TL