



MENTAL HEALTH BULLETIN

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

DATE OF ISSUE
DECEMBER 12, 1997

EFFECTIVE DATE
NOVEMBER 18, 1997

NUMBER
SMH-07-05

SUBJECT

TRANSPORTING PATIENTS

BY


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SCOPE: State Mental Health Facilities

PURPOSE: To establish Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services policy for the management of potential risks in transporting patients by motor vehicle, train, aircraft or other passenger carrier, This policy should not restrict or impede emergency medical transportation.

BACKGROUND : This policy bulletin was prepared in response to a need for revision and clarification of a previous bulletin entitled "Transporting Patients", Number 99-84-05 which will be obsolete with issue of this bulletin.

POLICY: Each state mental health facility shall have a written policy which identifies the process to evaluate patient condition and address appropriate accommodations for transporting patients which insures the safety and comfort of the patients and other vehicle occupants. Patient transportation may include state vehicles operated by a Commonwealth employee, privately owned vehicles operated by volunteers, family members or friends of the patient, or commercial carriers such as buses, taxicabs, trains, aircraft, or watercraft. Employees may not transport patients in a privately owned vehicle.

Hospitals which permit volunteers to transport patients in private vehicles must establish a policy with appropriate risk management safeguards for this practice which includes informing the volunteers of the vehicle insurance requirements contained in the DPW Administrative Manual Section 7051 and verifying compliance by any volunteers transporting patients in their vehicles.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Director, Bureau of Hospital Operations, H&W Building,
Room 502, Harrisburg, PA 17105

Each state mental health facility policy shall include the following provisions:

1. Each patient's medical record will contain a designation of any restrictions or required accommodations for transportation of the patient. If no accommodation or restriction is required, this will be noted on the patient record. This documentation may be provided on a check list form signed by the patient's physician, on the physician order sheet, or other document such as the treatment plan or monthly treatment plan review.
 2. The determination of the patient's physical and emotional needs for transportation will be made by the patient's physician based upon the physician's evaluation and the treatment team members' evaluations and recommendations at the time of the admission assessment, monthly treatment plan review, and annual assessment. Hospitals may choose to require within their policy a physician assessment and documentation for each planned trip with consideration of current patient condition, means of transportation, and destination.
 3. The hospital policy on transporting patients should address procedures to be implemented when a patient's physical and/or emotional condition significantly changes - Each county evaluates services provided at the published level and determines whether providers shall be reimbursed at that maximum level of reimbursement. The contract between the county and the provider should specify the rate of reimbursement and the services to be provided. If the county is reimbursing at a level lower than the published fee schedule, it will be at the discretion of the county to entertain rate changes. If negotiation is permitted, no provider may exceed the published fee schedule. The published fee schedule represents the maximum amount of Department participation (both state and federal) and therefore, no additional state or federal funds may be made available. Approved rate changes will have an effective date determined by the Office of Mental Health, Medicaid Operations Section. No effective date will be granted retroactively.
 4. An unusual transportation event may require a special physician assessment and accommodations. Circumstances may include trips of unusual time duration, unfamiliar means of transportation such as air travel, or a destination which may create increased anxiety and/or risk for a patient, such as an amusement park, isolated park area, or the site of court proceedings or unfamiliar, fearful medical procedures.
- * This Bulletin replaces Mental Health Bulletin number 99-84-05 entitled "Transporting Patients" which is obsolete.