

## **Psychiatric Hospitalizations**

McKean County offers crisis and emergency mental health services 24 hours a day by accessing the Mental Health Crisis Line at 814-362-4653 or 1-800-459-6568. Through the crisis line individuals can access needed inpatient psychiatric care as either a voluntary or involuntary admission.

### **Voluntary Commitment under section 201 of the Mental Health Act**

A voluntary commitment may be appropriate for anyone 14 years of age or older who is experiencing a mental health crisis and feels that an inpatient stay is necessary for his/her safety. A person seeking treatment under Section 201 may arrive at an emergency room for an evaluation to determine the level of treatment needed. There are no hearings required during this admission and no information is submitted to the state police regarding the person's psychiatric treatment. At the time of admission, the individual will be asked to agree to give 72-hour written notice before leaving the facility if they should decide to leave against medical advice. If inpatient care is recommended, the individual must sign a 201 form and assist in developing a treatment plan with the treating facility.

Adolescents under the age of 14 years may be admitted on a voluntary admission by a parent or legal guardian. In addition, parents or legal guardians are able to sign a 201 for an adolescent under the age of 18 years, but only if the adolescent is already in an emergency room and it is recommended by a physician.

There is no time limit on a voluntary inpatient stay. The individual may stay as long as he/she and the medical staff believes there is a continued need for inpatient treatment.

### **Involuntary Commitment under section 302 of the Mental Health Act**

An involuntary admission under section 302 of the Mental Health Act begins with an application (the petition) for emergency evaluation and treatment of persons who are seriously mentally ill and are in danger of hurting themselves or others. The Mental Health Act designates that a person must be mentally ill and at least one of the following be present for involuntary treatment to occur.

1. The person would be unable without the care, supervision and assistance of others to satisfy his/her need for nourishment, personal or medical care, shelter or self-protection or safety and that death or serious physical debilitation would occur within 30 days unless treatment was provided.
2. The person has attempted suicide or the person has made threats to commit suicide and committed acts in furtherance of the threats.
3. The person has mutilated himself/herself or the person has made threats to mutilate and committed acts in furtherance of the threats.
4. The person has inflicted or attempted to inflict serious bodily harm on another or has threatened serious bodily harm and has committed acts in furtherance of the threat to commit harm to another.

Once a petition is complete, the individual will be taken to an emergency room by the police or ambulance for an evaluation by a physician to determine if they need to be admitted for involuntary psychiatric inpatient treatment. If the individual is admitted they may be kept no longer than 120 hours unless a hearing is scheduled within that time and a petition for extended treatment is completed under section 303 of the Mental Health Act.

**Extended Emergency Involuntary Treatment or section 303 of the Mental Health Act**

If the doctor determines that additional inpatient days are needed the hospital will file a 303 Commitment Petition with the Courts for Extended Emergency Involuntary Treatment up to 20 days.

**Longer-Term Involuntary Treatment or section 304 of the Mental Health Act**

When a doctor determines that the individual is in need of continued involuntary inpatient treatment beyond the 20 days the hospital must file a petition under section 304 of the Mental Health Act and request another hearing. Testimony is provided by the treating psychiatrist stating that the patient is still suffering from a severe mental illness and needs further treatment. The mental health review officer can order further treatment for a period not to exceed an additional 90 days.

**Extended Long-Term Treatment or section 305 of the Mental Health Act**

When treatment beyond the additional 90 days is needed a hearing under section 305 of the Mental Health Act is required. The mental health review officer can order treatment for a period not to exceed an additional 180 days.

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All individuals receiving involuntary treatment will be represented at each successive hearing by an attorney. Patient rights are provided to all consumers upon admission. A patient has the right to an appeal at each level of the involuntary commitment process.

Act 77 (Mental Health Procedures Act-Omnibus Amendments Act of Jul. 2, 1996, P.L. 481) Amended the Mental Health Procedures Act of 1976 and requires all counties to submit to the Pennsylvania State Police the names of all individuals who have been involuntarily committed to inpatient treatment. This Act prohibits anyone committed under Sections 302, 303 or 304 to possess, use, manufacture, control, sell or transfer firearms. A person has the right to appeal this process.

The Pennsylvania law pertaining to mental health voluntary and involuntary commitments may be found at 055 Pa. Code § 5100.71-90a.