

**If you have an Advanced Directive, make sure that the psychiatric facility has the information to help you in your Recovery.**

**According to Pennsylvania law (55PA Code Sec.5100.52), every patient and resident of a health care facility has certain rights.**

### **VOLUNTARY VS. INVOLUNTARY PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT COMMITMENTS**

**VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT - (a "201")**  
You and your psychiatrist feel you need inpatient treatment and you agree to be admitted to a psychiatric inpatient unit. If you are in the hospital on a voluntary commitment and wish to be discharged, you will need to give the hospital notice that you wish to leave. The hospital has 72 hours in which to do another psychiatric evaluation to see if you are a threat to yourself or others or if you can survive safely in the community. At this evaluation the psychiatrist may feel you can safely leave the hospital or decide that you are still in need of a hospitalization and recommend that your commitment be changed to an involuntary. You have the right to be offered a voluntary commitment before an involuntary commitment hearing is scheduled.

**INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT (a "302") -** An Involuntary Commitment is used when you are not in agreement with being psychiatrically hospitalized.

**The criteria for an involuntary commitment are:**

- You have presented a danger to others within the last 30 days.
- You are unable to care for yourself and this poor care can result in serious bodily harm to you.
- You attempt suicide or made serious threats of suicide and acts in furtherance of those threats.
- You substantially mutilate yourself.

An Involuntary commitment can place an individual in a psychiatric inpatient unit for up to 120 hours or 5 days. If you are committed in an involuntary commitment and the psychiatrist recommends an extended commitment, you have the right to be offered a voluntary commitment before another commitment hearing is scheduled. You have the right to invite an Advocate, family member(s), a professional(s), or any individual who may help support you at the hearing.

### **BASIC RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

You have the right to:

- Be told why you were brought to the hospital for treatment.
- Make completed phone calls.
- Give the facility the names of people whom you want contacted.
- Unrestricted and private communication.
- Assistance from an advocate or anyone you feel will be helpful to you.

- Make complaints and to have your complaints heard.
- Receive visitors of your choosing at reasonable hours unless your treatment team has determined in advance that a visitor(s) would seriously interfere with your or others' treatment or welfare.
- Wear appropriate clothing of your choice.
- Include your family in your treatment decisions.
- Be treated with dignity and respect, and at all times are expected to treat others with dignity and respect.

### **TREATMENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

You have the right to:

- Participate in the development and review of an individualized treatment plan within 72 hours of your admission and participate in your discharge plan.
- Discuss the choice of psychotropic medications or refuse psychotropic medications. If you are a voluntary patient, your refusal is to be honored unless you pose an imminent threat to yourself or others, realizing that refusing medical advice *may* delay your becoming stable. In some cases if you are considered a danger to yourself or others, medication can be administered against your will by authorized personnel.
- Be discharged as soon as you no longer need care and treatment.
- A second opinion if you do not agree with the treating professionals.

You have all these rights, but some of these rights can be limited until you can think clearly or act appropriately.

## QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL TO YOUR STAY:

What is a Community Meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

What types of therapy are available to me? (group/individual, occupational, recreational) \_\_\_\_\_

How do I find out who my therapist is? \_\_\_\_\_

When am I permitted to wear my own clothes? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a phone available for my use? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the visiting hours? \_\_\_\_\_

Who can visit the ward? Are there age restrictions for visitors? \_\_\_\_\_

Can I choose what is on my meal tray? \_\_\_\_\_

Are snacks available? Can I order food from the outside? \_\_\_\_\_

How can my family find out about my status? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any restrictions about private communication (letters and phone calls)? \_\_\_\_\_

When are medications given? \_\_\_\_\_

How can my family be involved in my care? \_\_\_\_\_

*Your treatment team including therapist, social worker, nurse and psychiatrist can assist you with your hospital's policies regarding these questions.*

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TO CONTACT THE ADULT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE  
CALL 570-342-7762 OR TOLL-FREE 1-877-315-6855

With your permission your family can also contact the Advocate.

## ADULT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY IN COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRIC IN-PATIENT UNITS

Our advocates ensure that persons in the community who experience mental illness are heard, serve as their own spokespersons and that the focus of their treatment, housing and employment options is based on their individual needs for their Recovery. Our advocates also work at Clarks Summit and Allentown State Hospitals helping to see that patients understand their rights, their rights are respected, and their stay is helpful.

When being admitted to a community inpatient psychiatric unit you will be given a Patient's Bill of Rights and receive an explanation of the grievance procedures. This brochure is an additional tool for you to know and understand your responsibilities and rights.



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Visit our website at  
[www.theadvocacyalliance.org](http://www.theadvocacyalliance.org)