

Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Bureau of Policy and Program Development

HealthChoices Behavioral Health

Policy Clarification

Issue Clarification #: 04-12
Date of Receipt: 08/09/2012

Applicability: All Zones
Source Documentation: OMH 92-16;
55 PA Code Chapter 5240, as proposed

Submitted by: All Counties and MCOs

County Authority: All Counties

Topic Area: Crisis Residential Services

Question:

Please clarify the time frame for medical clearance for admission to a Crisis Residential Service. Must the medical clearance be conducted prior to or within 24 hours of formal admission to the Crisis Residential facility?

Background:

Crisis residential programs provide a temporary place to stay for individuals who need to be removed from a stressful environment until they stabilize or other arrangements can be made. The facility must provide continuous supervision and supports for individuals in crisis, but who are not in need of inpatient treatment. The crisis residential program must ensure that individuals have medical clearance prior to placement in the facility per OMH Bulletin 92-16 and 55 PA Code Chapter 5240, as proposed.


Medical clearance typically is determined by a face to face evaluation with a physician. The crisis residential program is required to have two staff members on duty at all times, one of whom is a medical professional or mental health professional. This does not require the program to have a physician on site 24/7. To access medical clearance prior to admission to the crisis residential program would require an individual in crisis to be evaluated at the emergency department of a local hospital or by a personal physician which would result in delays in receiving appropriate crisis intervention services.

Crisis residential program providers have requested that OMHSAS clarify medical clearance protocol prior to admission to the facility. Due to the nature of the service provided by the crisis residential program, it is imperative that medical clearance occur in a timely manner to ensure safety of the individual and any other resident of the facility.

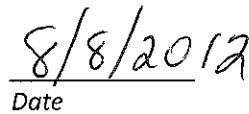
OMHSAS Answer/Response:

As per OMH Bulletin 92-16 and 55 PA Code Chapter 5240, as proposed, "Providers shall ensure that all individuals have medical clearance before they are housed in the facility". Although medical clearance is typically determined by a face to face evaluation with a physician (or physician extender), a crisis residential program may develop procedures for medical clearance utilizing a nursing assessment and telephone consultation with the facility's physician to provide a verbal order for medical clearance and admission to the facility.

Prior to admission to the crisis residential program, a nursing assessment shall be completed by the registered nurse on staff within their scope of practice. Upon completion of the nursing assessment, a telephone consultation with the facility physician for medical clearance must occur. Upon receiving the verbal order for medical clearance which must be documented in the record, the individual can be admitted to the crisis residential program. The documentation of the verbal order for medical clearance must be signed by the physician within 24 hours of the admission to the crisis residential program.



Director, Bureau of Policy and Program Development



Date