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**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION
NUMBER**

611

OPR: HEALTH SERVICES

INMATE ORIENTATION TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

I. GENERAL

This Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) Administrative Regulation (AR) establishes the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for informing inmates within ADOC custody about the available mental health services and how to request those services.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the ADOC to ensure that inmates within ADOC custody receive a verbal and written orientation to mental health services, including facility-specific material, both during the Reception Mental Health Screening and following intra-system transfer to another ADOC facility.

III. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Reception Mental Health Screening: An initial structured inquiry into each inmate’s mental health history and observation of his or her functioning, plus a suicide risk assessment for the purpose of identifying and addressing any emergent or urgent mental health needs. This screening is completed as soon as possible upon arrival.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The ADOC Director of Mental Health Services is responsible for ensuring oversight of the development of this AR.
- B. The ADOC Regional Psychologists are responsible for oversight and monitoring of the implementation of this AR.
- C. The Warden (or designee) at each facility is responsible for ensuring that all ADOC staff at that facility receive training on the implementation of this AR.
- D. The Vendor Mental Health Program Director is responsible for ensuring that all Vendor staff receives training on the implementation of this AR.

- E. The Vendor Health Services Administrator and the Vendor Mental Health Site Administrator at each facility are jointly responsible for ensuring that all Vendor staff at that facility receive training on the implementation of this AR.

V. **PROCEDURES**

- A. The Vendor mental health staff conducting Reception Mental Health Screenings will provide an inmate with an individual verbal and written orientation to mental health services on ADOC Form MH-002, *Inmate Orientation to Mental Health Services*, which includes the following information:
 - 1. The available mental health services.
 - 2. How to request mental health services, including in emergency situations.
 - 3. That mental health services are voluntary unless there is a risk of harm to self, others, or the safe operation of the facility related to a diagnosed mental health disorder.
 - 4. That mental health services are confidential, subject to certain limitations, in accordance with AR 604, *Confidentiality in Mental Health Services*.
 - 5. That inmate co-payments are not required for mental health services.
- B. The Vendor mental health staff conducting Reception Mental Health Screenings will provide an inmate with a copy of the completed ADOC Form MH-002, *Inmate Orientation to Mental Health Services*, and will ensure that the original ADOC Form MH-002 is filed in that inmate's medical record.
- C. The Vendor mental health staff conducting Reception Mental Health Screenings will consider and address special communication issues related to an inmate's disability, literacy, or language barrier during the orientation process.
 - 1. If an inmate has a disability or literacy issue, then the Vendor mental health staff conducting Reception Mental Health Screenings will assist that inmate in understanding the material.
 - 2. If an inmate has a language barrier issue, then the Vendor mental health staff conducting Reception Mental Health Screenings will either:
 - a. Request assistance from an available ADOC staff or Vendor staff who speaks that inmate's preferred language.
 - b. If ADOC staff or Vendor staff who speaks that inmate's preferred language is not available, then utilize a translation service.
- D. The Vendor Mental Health Site Administrator at each facility will develop and annually review that facility's written material on inmate orientation to mental health services to ensure that the material is current and accurate.

- E. The Vendor Mental Health Program Director will ensure that Vendor Mental Health Site Administrator at each facility develops written material on inmate orientation to mental health services that will be included during that facility's orientation process that is both:
1. Uniform for those mental health services available at all facilities.
 2. Facility-specific for those mental health services available at that specific facility.

VI. DISPOSITION

Any forms used will be disposed of and retained according to the Departmental Records Disposition Authority (RDA).

VII. FORMS

ADOC Form MH-002, *Inmate Orientation to Mental Health Services*.

VIII. SUPERSEDES

This AR supersedes AR 611, *Inmate Orientation to Mental Health Services*, dated June 17, 2005, and any related changes.

IX. PERFORMANCE

- A. Code of Alabama § 14-1-1.1 *et seq.*
- B. *Braggs v. Hamm*, No. 2:14-cv-00601-MHT-JTA (M.D. Ala. filed June 17, 2014).
- C. NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CORRECTIONAL HEALTH CARE, STANDARDS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES (2015).
- D. NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CORRECTIONAL HEALTH CARE, STANDARDS FOR HEALTH SERVICES IN PRISONS (2018).



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Alabama Department of Corrections
INMATE ORIENTATION TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



The Alabama Department of Corrections provides comprehensive mental health services including, but not limited to:

- Assessment and treatment of mental health problems and disorders.
- Referral to a psychiatrist when indicated for diagnostic evaluation and medication management when recommended as part of a comprehensive treatment plan.
- Group and individual counseling.
- Crisis intervention and management.
- Residential mental health treatment and hospitalization, if necessary.

Adjusting to incarceration and it is not unusual for a person to experience distress, including a sense of grief and loss. More information is available to answer any questions you may have about coping with stress, mental illness, and treatment for substance use disorders. In addition, mental health staff are trained and available to talk with you about special needs such as gender-related issues, eating disorders, or other topics related to your wellbeing.

If you wish to schedule an appointment with mental health staff to address your concerns, please complete a Mental Health Referral Form (MH-008). Place the completed Referral form in the Mental Health Referral box or the Sick Call box. NOTE: If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, or if you have concerns that need to be addressed immediately, notify any ADOC staff, medical or mental health staff member.

Your participation in mental health services is voluntary, except in emergency situations where there is an immediate risk to your safety, that of others, or the operation of the facility. In addition, under limited circumstances, individuals experiencing a serious mental illness that creates a clear risk to themselves or others may be provided due process through the administrative review process that determines if they are required to receive treatment.

Mental health and medical staff work together to address your needs, and both have access to all of your health records. Ordinarily, information about the mental health services you receive is confidential. However, in some circumstances, mental health staff are legally or ethically required to share treatment information to ensure your well-being or the well-being of others. In the interest of keeping you and others safe, mental health staff are required to disclose information about your mental health treatment to others if you:

- Report that you have thoughts, plans, or intentions to harm yourself or others.
- Present a danger of injury to yourself or others.
- Require movement to a new program assignment, special unit or cell for observation and mental health treatment.
- Require transfer to a psychiatric hospital outside of the prison.
- Present a reasonably clear risk of escape or creation of institutional disorder.

Mental health staff members also have a legal duty to report to appropriate authorities any unreported, suspected abuse or neglect of a child.

To address any of the required disclosures mentioned above, your mental health records may be shared on a need-to-know basis with the Warden or designee, internal investigative staff, ADOC legal counsel, departmental and accrediting audit staff; and persons authorized by court order or judgment. These individuals will take all necessary steps to ensure the privacy of your information is maintained. All other persons or agencies require an authorization for release of information signed by you before they can access your mental health records.

Finally, while ADOC strives to meet the needs of each individual's mental health needs, if you believe the mental health services provided to you are inadequate and you are not able to address your concerns through discussion with clinical staff you may file an inmate grievance (Health Services Inmate Grievance Form).

My signature below signifies that the information on this form has been explained to me and I have received a copy of this information for my future reference.

Inmate Signature

AIS#

____/____/____
Date