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**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION  
NUMBER 610**

**OPR: HEALTH SERVICES**

## **RECEPTION MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING AND EVALUATION**

### **I. GENERAL**

This Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) Administrative Regulation (AR) establishes the responsibilities, policies, and procedures for screening and evaluation of potential mental health problems when an inmate is received by the ADOC.

### **II. POLICY**

A mental health screening will be completed when an inmate is received by ADOC to assess the individual's history of diagnosis and treatment for mental illness, suicidal ideation/behavior, substance abuse, and current mental status and risk of harm to self or others. Further mental health evaluation will be conducted for inmates who present signs or symptoms of a pre-existing or on-going mental disorder.

ADOC policies are consistent with NCCHC standards for screenings and evaluation at reception (receiving) facilities.

### **III. DEFINITION(S) AND ACRONYM(S)**

Refer to AR 602, Mental Health Definitions and Acronyms, for a complete glossary of terms. See below for specific terms used in this AR:

- A. **NCCHC –National Commission on Correctional Health Care:** An accrediting agency that develops and publishes standards for health care in correctional settings including prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities.
- B. **Reception Mental Health Evaluation:** A process that takes place at a reception center to identify inmates who have mental health needs or potential elevated risk of suicide or self-harm. This begins with a Reception Mental Health Screening by an RN and a Suicide Risk Assessment by a licensed counselor and may include a referral for a Psychiatric Evaluation for selected inmates when clinically indicated. (This process is also known as Receiving Mental Health Evaluation.)
- C. **Reception Mental Health Screening:** An initial screening of an inmate's mental health history and functioning upon reception for the purpose of identifying current

crises, need for continued care, and/or need for referral for psychiatric evaluation. (This process is also known as Receiving Mental Health Screening.)

- D. **Sound Confidentiality:** Provision of services in a manner such that information disclosed cannot be overheard by others nearby.

#### IV. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The ADOC Director of Mental Health is responsible for ensuring that a process exists for inmates to receive a mental health screening, and subsequent further evaluation if needed, upon initial reception into ADOC custody.
- B. The contract Mental Health Director is responsible for ensuring processes are in place for training contract mental health staff assigned to the screening and evaluation process, and for monitoring this process for quality improvement.
- C. Each facility's contract Health Services Administrator and Mental Health Site Administrator are responsible for assigning mental health staff who will screen inmates at reception and take the appropriate actions to address any identified mental health needs.
- D. The facility's contract Mental Health Site Administrator (or designee) is responsible for maintaining ADOC Form MH-012 (Reception Mental Health Screenings Log).

#### V. **PROCEDURES**

- A. The contract Mental Health Training Director will develop and coordinate the training of contract mental health staff assigned to complete reception mental health screenings. The training will include, but is not limited to:
1. The goals and methods of the screening.
  2. Interview techniques that will maximize the information provided by the inmate.
  3. Orientation of inmates to ADOC mental health services.
- B. The facility's contract Mental Health Site Administrator will ensure that contract mental health staff conducting reception mental health screenings have completed the required training prior to assuming this responsibility.
- C. Contract mental health staff will:
1. Be trained to identify inmates who are at elevated risk for self-harm, or who are in need of immediate mental health assessment and treatment.
  2. Review transfer health documentation prior to conducting the reception mental health screening to optimize available information about the inmate's mental status or past treatment.
  3. Conduct the Reception Mental Health Screening as soon as possible, and no later than twelve (12) hours, upon an inmate's arrival in the ADOC.

4. Conduct the mental health screening and evaluation in an area that provides sound confidentiality and encourages inmate self-report.
  5. Provide the inmate an initial description of the mental health services available in the ADOC and how inmates may access these services. This orientation will be conducted in accordance with AR 611 (Inmate Orientation to Mental Health Services).
  6. Document the initial mental health screening on ADOC Form MH-011, Reception Mental Health Screening.
    - a. The original of the form will be filed in the inmate's health record.
    - b. A copy will be forwarded to the licensed counselor who will conduct the initial Suicide Risk Assessment.
    - c. A copy also will be provided to the Psychological Associate responsible for Social History Assessment.
- D. When the inmate arrives at the ADOC with a current psychotropic medication order:
1. Psychotropic medications accompanying the inmate when entering ADOC will be transferred to the facility's Health Services department.
  2. The mental health nurse assigned to the reception process will verify the order within 12 hours of the screening and ensure a supply of medication is available until a psychiatrist can complete an evaluation.

If the prescription cannot be verified within twelve (12) hours, the inmate shall be seen by a psychiatrist or nurse practitioner within twenty-four (24) hours of the reception mental health screening during regular working hours. Weekend and holiday response can be via telepsychiatry when necessary, to ensure appropriate medication.
- E. When the reception mental health screening suggests that an inmate may be at risk for harm to self or others or may be experiencing signs of mental health crisis or deterioration:
1. An emergent mental health referral will be generated.
  2. The inmate will be placed on constant observation until a QMHP is available to evaluate him or her.
- F. The contract mental health staff member responsible for the screening will refer the inmate for a Psychiatric Evaluation if the inmate reports a history of mental health treatment, suicidal acts/ideation, unprovoked physical violence toward others, or when the inmate's presentation suggests the need for Psychiatric Evaluation. The Psychiatric Evaluation will be documented on ADOC Form MH-018 (Psychiatric Evaluation).

- G. The Mental Health Site Administrator (or designee) at reception facilities will maintain a monthly log (ADOC Form MH-012, Reception Mental Health Screenings Log), to identify trends in the number of inmates being admitted with mental health problems. The log will be submitted to the contract Mental Health Director with the monthly Mental Health Services reports.

**VI. DISPOSITION**

Refer to AR 601, Mental Health Forms and Disposition.

**VII. FORMS**

Refer to AR 601, Mental Health Forms and Disposition.

- A. ADOC Form MH-011, Reception Mental Health Screening
- B. ADOC Form MH-012, Reception Mental Health Screenings Log
- C. ADOC Form MH-018, Psychiatric Evaluation

**VIII. SUPERSEDES**

This Administrative Regulation supersedes AR 610, *Reception Mental Health Screening*, dated May 14, 2004 and any changes.

**IX. PERFORMANCE**

This Administrative Regulation is published under the authority of:

- A. National Commission on Correctional Health Care: Standards for Health Care in Prisons, 2018, Standard P-E-05, National Commission on Correctional Health Care: Standards for Mental Health Services in Correctional Facilities, 2015, MH-E-02.
- B. The Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Statutory Authority: Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 22-50-11.

  
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Jefferson Dunn,  
Commissioner