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I. Purpose of the Office of Mental Health (OMH) Official Policy Manual

The OMH Official Policy Manual is intended to provide a compendium of policy directives which represents the organization's current statements related to the provision of mental health services for patients being treated at State operated psychiatric facilities. These policy directives set forth essential system-wide requirements and are based upon statutes, standards, and executive level policy decisions.

II. Facility-Specific Policy


Where the OMH has not developed policy directives essential to the provision of mental health services, each facility may develop policies consistent with good clinical practice and relevant statutes, standards and policies. When a statewide policy does exist, facilities must ensure that they are substantially in compliance with the statewide policy.

III. Revision of the OMH Official Policy Manual

The request for development or revision of policy directives must be transmitted to OMH Counsel's Office through the appropriate organizational channel (i.e., facility director, deputy commissioner). The decision to act upon requests for policy revision or development rests with the executive level of the organization.

Once the decision has been made to revise or develop a policy directive, it is essential to obtain input from clinical and administrative staff affected by the policy directive. The complexity of the development phase of any policy directive will depend on both the nature of the topic and any time limitations.

Once a policy directive has been distributed and implementation has been initiated, ongoing review is necessary to address the effectiveness of the policy directive. In some cases, further revision may be necessary. The appropriate organizational channel, (i.e. facility director, deputy commissioner), for the process is the same as that utilized during the initial identification phase.

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IV. Granting of Exceptions to Policy Directives

Policy directives are established to uniformly apply to all organizational units. In some instances there may be the need for an exception to a policy directive to accommodate a unique situation. Exceptions to implementation of policy directives must be consistent with statutes and standards. Requests for exceptions to implementation of a specific policy directive or sections thereof must be made through the facility directors and deputy commissioners. The ultimate authority for granting such requests lies with the Commissioner. When an exception has been granted, the granting authority is responsible for so notifying the Bureau of Policy, Regulation and Legislation.

V. Questions or Issues Related to the OMH Official Policy Manual

Inquiries may be directed to:

Bureau of Policy, Regulation and Legislation
Counsel's Office
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, New York 12229
Phone (518) 473-6945