



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Suburban Regional Human Rights Authority
Report of Findings
HRA #12-100-9026
Elgin Mental Health Center

Introduction

In August 2012, the North Suburban Regional Human Rights Authority (HRA) opened this investigation regarding Elgin Mental Health Center (hereafter referred to as Center), Forensic Treatment Program, William White Unit. A complaint was received that alleged that consumers have limited access to their personal possessions. The rights of consumers are protected by the Illinois Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code (405 ILCS 5/2-104).

Recipients receiving services at EMHC's Forensic Treatment Program have been remanded by Illinois County Courts to the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) under statutes finding them Unfit to Stand Trial (UST) and Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI). Placement evaluations determine the most appropriate inpatient or outpatient setting for forensic treatment based on a number of factors including age, gender, mental health diagnosis, and security need. Unless a person is specifically ordered to receive services in an outpatient setting, court ordered referrals under state forensic statutes call for placement in a secure inpatient setting. The Forensic Treatment Program has 315 beds.

Methodology

To pursue this investigation, the HRA conducted a site visit in September 2012, at which time the allegations were discussed with the Director of the Forensic Program and the Unit's Manager. A consumer housed on the William White unit was interviewed by telephone.

Findings

The complaint reported that consumers were able to access their personal storage bins five times a day; this has recently been changed to two times a day. The concern was that consumers can now get personal coffee only twice a day.

At the site visit, it was stated that about fifteen of the thirty-two consumers housed on this unit have a personal supply of coffee. Each consumer has his own bin and the bin is kept within a locked cabinet in the dining room. When coffee is being dispensed from the personal bins, it was stated that the process is well-supervised for safety, health issues, and inventory concerns and thus the process can get "labor intensive". It was stated that consumers had access to their personal coffee three times a day - 9:45 a.m., 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. In addition, coffee is provided by the Center at the breakfast meal. Recently it was decided to eliminate the 7:00 p.m. time that coffee can be obtained from a personal supply. It was stated that the recent time change (from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.) was implemented due to consumers being awake during the night; these consumers would request medication to enable them to sleep. The schedule is as follow:

9:45 am coffee/snacks

5:00 pm coffee only

7:00 pm snacks only

Conclusion

Pursuant to the Illinois Mental Health Code, Section 2-104, "every recipient who resides in a mental health or developmental disabilities facility shall be permitted to receive, possess and use personal property and shall be provided with a reasonable amount of storage space therefor, except in the circumstances and under the conditions provided in this Section. (a) Possession and use of certain classes of property may be restricted by the facility director when necessary to protect the recipient or others from harm, provided that notice of such restriction shall be given to all recipients upon admission."

The Mental Health Code does not state how often a consumer should have access to his/her personal possessions. One can assume *reasonable access* would be the guideline. The HRA concludes that three times a day is reasonable access; the allegation that consumers have limited access to their personal possessions is unsubstantiated.

However, the consumer has the right to use his possessions as he chooses, unless said possession(s) have been deemed harmful to the consumer or others. Should a physician determine that excessive caffeine is causing a consumer to request medication to assist with sleep, an order to restrict the caffeine would be warranted. This determination must be made on an individual basis.

RESPONSE

Notice: The following page(s) contain the provider response. Due to technical requirements, some provider responses appear verbatim in retyped format.



Pat Quinn, *Governor*

Michelle R.B. Saddler, *Secretary*

Division of Mental Health - Region 2
Elgin Mental Health Center ■ Singer Mental Health Center

RECOVERY IS OUR VISION
Recovery is a Personal Journey of Hope, Healing, Growth, Choice, and Change

October 23, 2012

Ms. Kori Larson - Chairperson
North Suburban Regional Human Rights Authority
9511 Harrison Street, W-300
Des Plaines, IL 60016-1565

Re: HRA #12-100-9026

Dear Ms. Larson:

Thank you for your thorough review of this matter. I note that none of the allegations were substantiated. The staff at the Elgin Mental Health Center strives to provide the best possible care and treatment for our consumers. As always, we will continue to work to quickly resolve any consumer concerns.

Please include our response with any public release of your Report of Findings.

Sincerely,

Paul N. Brock, M.P.A., M.H.A.
Hospital Administrator

PNB/JP/lf

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