



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Suburban Regional Human Rights Authority
Report of Findings
HRA #15-100-9016
Elgin Mental Health Center

Introduction

In February 2015, the North Suburban Regional Human Rights Authority (HRA) opened this investigation regarding Elgin Mental Health Center (hereafter referred to as Center), Forensic Treatment Program (FTP) Unit Dix. A complaint was received that alleged unsanitary conditions in that staff members are cleaning the unit with towels that are designated for consumer hygiene purposes.

The rights of consumers are protected by the Code of Federal Regulations (42 C.F.R. 482) and the Center's Bed/Bath Linens policy.

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 an on-site visit and discussed the allegation with the Nursing Manager.

Findings

The HRA toured the unit with the Nursing Manager to see what housekeeping supplies were available. The housekeeping cabinet contained ample cleaning supplies like mops; toilet bowls brushes, and liquid cleaning products. There was also a bin that contained microfiber cleaning cloths. The HRA then went to the linen supply closet where the towels are stored. The closet had only a few towels; the towels were clean but had visible stains. The Manager acknowledged that consumer towels might be used if a staff member needed to wipe up a spill or a towel would be used to clean up a consumer after a hygiene accident.

The Center's Laundering Facility Supplied Bed/Bath Linens policy states (in part) that, "The Central Linen Room shall provide appropriate bed and bath linens for recipients and shall comply with cleanliness and infection control standards. Recipients shall use only facility bed and bath linens which shall only be washed by a contractual vendor. If desired, recipients may use their own bedspreads and decorative pillow shams and may wash them in the residential treatment unit washing machines in accordance with unit procedures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, in its Standard Precautions recommendations, states, "soiled linen should be

bagged at the location where it was used; should not be sorted or rinsed in recipient care areas; and if soiled with blood or body fluids, should be placed in bags that prevent leakage." While the risk of disease transmission from soiled linens is negligible, according to the Center for Disease Control, the procedures described below shall be followed to reduce any potential risk. Towels, wash cloths, other linens and canvas laundry bags shall be used only for the purpose intended. Under no circumstances shall laundry bags or mesh bags be used to transfer recipient clothing from one unit to another or on discharge. Laundry bags shall not be used as storage bags for recipient belongings or activity equipment or any other inappropriate purpose."

Conclusion

The Code of Federal Regulations Section 482.42 states that, "The hospital must provide a sanitary environment to avoid sources and transmission of infections and communicable diseases. There must be an active program for the prevention, control, and investigation of infections and communicable diseases." To avoid all sources and transmissions of infections and communicable diseases, the Center must abide by its own policy which states that towels, wash cloths, and other linens shall be used only for the purpose intended. The HRA recommends that hospital administration instruct all employees to use facility linens only for the purpose intended.

RESPONSE

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



Bruce Rauner, Governor

Illinois Department of Human Services

James T. Dimas, Secretary-designate

**Division of Mental Health – Region 2
Elgin Mental Health Center**

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

June 29, 2015

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

Re: HRA #15-100-9016

Dear Ms. Larson:

Thank you for your thorough review. The staff at Elgin Mental Health Center take pride in trying to keep the patient's environment clean and sanitized. In the event a towel is used to clean up a spill, please be assured, all the linen at EMHC is laundered at a professional cleaning service that sanitizes each load of laundry. EMHC will make efforts to re-educate staff and ensure appropriate linens are available to both staff and patients for all intended purposes.

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

Sincerely,

Meredith Kiss, MA
Acting Hospital Administrator

MK/JP/aw