

War Memorial Hospital

TYPE: DEPARTMENTAL – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

POLICY: PATIENT COMMUNICATION RIGHTS, TELEPHONE USAGE, WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE, MAIL, AND VISITATION

REPLACES: 7/10, 2/14; 5/15, 7/16

PURPOSE: To provide and assure patients the opportunity and use of the telephone as well as the opportunity to send and receive written correspondence.

PROCEDURE:

- A. Patients may receive and make telephone calls as well as receive or send out mail. The Recipient Rights Officer's phone number is prominently displayed.
- B. Phone calls to patients are discouraged during meals and non-scheduled phone times; a message can be taken if necessary.
- C. Limitation of a patient's rights to use the phone in accordance with state statutes is explained to the patient and written in the clinical record with the reasons for the limitations. The patient is made aware of their right to notify the Recipient Right's Officer.
- D. Reasonable times and places for telephone use are established and are in writing and posted. [MHC 330.1726(2)]
- E. Patients may make a reasonable number of calls, including long distance calls, without need for personal funds. Patients should limit their use of the phone to 10 minutes per call to allow other patients the opportunity to make calls. If no other patient is waiting to utilize the phone, the patient may take longer.
- F. Patients are allowed to contact the Recipient Rights Officer or legal counsel outside the schedule phone times.
- G. Patient shall have the right to communicate by mail or telephone or to receive visitors and shall not be further limited except as authorized in the patient's individualized treatment plan. [MHC 330.1726(4)]
- H. Patients are allowed to receive written correspondence and will be allowed to open their mail in private unless there is reason to believe the patient has received something in the mail that would jeopardize their treatment or wellbeing. In instances such as this a staff member will be present when the mail is opened to ensure no contraband was received. All personal property mailed to the patient will be logged on the Personal Property Inventory Form by staff and any contraband will be dealt with according to policy. Any mail that must be destroyed will be appropriately disposed of while maintaining patient confidentiality. [MHC 330.1726(2), 330.1752]
- I. Patients will be provided with a reasonable amount of postage and with access to writing materials and will not be required to pay postage for written correspondence they wish to have mailed. [MHC 330.1726(2)]

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- J. Mail is picked up and delivered daily to the Behavioral Health Center in accordance with the US Postal Service hours of operation. [MHC 330.1726(2)]
- K. Patients will have available space for visits. Reasonable times and places for visits may be established and, if established, shall be in writing and posted in each living unit. [MHC 330.1726(2-3)]
- L. If a patient is able to secure the services of a mental health professional, he or she shall be allowed to see the professional at any reasonable time. (MHC 330.1715)
- M. Limitations on communication do not apply to a resident and an attorney or court or any other individual if the communication involves matters that may be the subject of legal inquiry. [MHC 330.1726(5)]

Cross Reference and Legal Authority

[Public Act 258 of 1974, as amended – MI Mental Health Code - Sections 330.100b, 330.1715, 330.1726, 330.1752](#)

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Date: July 8, 2010

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Date: September 4, 2015

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Date: May 8, 2015

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Date: July 11, 2016

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Date: January 23rd, 2017

REVIEWED BY: Corinna Haller, Director of Nursing

Date: January 31, 2017

APPROVED BY: Recipient Rights Advisory Committee

Date: April 28, 2017

REVIEWED BY: Corinna Haller, Director of Nursing

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