

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title: Psychiatric Admissions Officer**

**Class Code: 50562**

**Pay Grade: GK**

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### **A. Purpose:**

Administers the commitment, admission, and release of patients to and from a psychiatric hospital to ensure patients' rights are respected and to ensure compliance with state rules and regulations and hospital policies and procedures.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

Psychiatric Admissions Officer works in the Admissions and Patient Services department of the Human Services Center. The incumbent interprets and enforces laws and regulations dealing with the commitment, admission, residence, and release of patients to prevent the abuse of patients' rights. The incumbent supervises and assists with the admission process and transport services. This position does not provide medical services or evaluations.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions that may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Makes pre-admission arrangements for patients to determine the patients' needs and to ensure that legal requirements are met.
  - a. Receives referral calls daily.
  - b. Gathers and assesses the individual's demographic information including legal residences obtained from the referral source, family, states attorney, mental illness board chairs, etc.
  - c. Obtains information about any pending criminal matters the individual may be involved in and flags the patient's chart.
  - d. Reviews individual's medical information with the facility's medical professional to determine medical stability and requests further assessment from the referral source, if needed.
  - e. Informs staff of the care needs and status of an incoming patient.
  - f. Gathers and reviews legal documentation to ensure that legal requirements of hospitalization are met, to ensure correct papers are filed, and to determine the type of admission.
  - g. Consults with hospital staff, community agencies, law enforcement officials, and private individuals throughout the admission process to exchange patient information.
  - h. Monitors the daily census to ensure availability of beds.
  - i. Ensures the legal process for those patients who turn 18 during the course of their hospitalization is followed correctly so that the patient's rights are upheld.
  - j. Drafts petitions for commitment hearings, processes all physician assessments and certificates for the commitment process, and provides information regarding the type of admission and hearing process.
  - k. Schedules forensic evaluations for those patients who have committed crimes in the community and gathers records in preparation for the assessment. Keeps psychiatrist apprised of any changes in the patient's status prior to the admission date.
  - l. Schedules patients for court ordered treatment pursuant to the criminal code.

- m. Advises the psychiatrist and treatment team of patients who have hearing dates for Forced Medication, Writs, Appeals, ECT, and Healthcare Consent. Coordinates with attorneys who are representing the patient.
  - n. Provides referral sources with alternative treatment providers if the patient does not meet HSC criteria for admission.
2. Arranges the scheduling and attendance of mental illness hearings to ensure that legal requirements are met and patient rights are respected.
    - a. Contacts attorneys and physicians.
    - b. Notifies counties of residence.
    - c. Obtains necessary statements and documents.
    - d. Records decisions.
    - e. Provides information.
    - f. Notifies medical records of admissions and of changes in the patients' status.
  3. Educates public officials, community agencies, private individuals, and staff on the processes, procedures, policies, and laws governing mental illness admissions and commitments. Consults with the department's attorney on complex, sensitive cases.
  4. Processes and handles applications and the necessary documentation required to transfer patients in and out of state, from county jails, mental health centers, veterans' hospitals, and between programs within the hospital to ensure state and hospital rules and regulations are followed.
  5. Arranges transport services for patients by communicating with staff and receiving agencies to plan for the safest and most cost effective transport.
  6. Oversees Admissions and Patient Services by reviewing and updating admissions, patient services, and registrar policy and identifying departmental resources and using them effectively.
  7. Supervises staff within Admissions and Patient Services to ensure the goals and objectives of the department and the vision of HSC is met.
    - a. Interviews, selects, and trains new employees.
    - b. Assigns work.
    - c. Approves leave.
    - d. Develops work schedules.
    - e. Plans and conducts staff meetings and provides ongoing direction and feedback to employees.
    - f. Addresses employee problems and develops corrective action plans.
    - g. Appraises work performance.
  8. Performs other work as assigned.

**D. Reporting Relationships:**

Supervises the Admissions and Patient Services department consisting of a Senior Secretary and Admissions Clerks who are responsible for admissions procedures and other clerical support duties, Mental Health Aides who transport patients, an HS Charge Nurse who performs admissions assessments and referral duties at night, an HS Nurse, a Chemical Dependency Counselor who handles CD referrals, and another Chemical Dependency Counselor who acts as a liaison between the Acute and CD units.

## **E. Challenges and Problems:**

Challenged to apply mental health rules, regulations, and laws that pertain to patient commitments, admissions, discharges, or day-to-day occurrences; to interpret complex mental health and criminal statutes; to stay knowledgeable of alternative treatment options and providers; to determine the legal residency of clients who have been transitory or homeless; to manage a large number of admissions and discharges; to supervise a multi-disciplinary staff; and to stay abreast of the numerous types of admissions and the different procedures applied to each one.

Typical problems include determining the appropriateness of releasing classified information, settling disputes of patients' residency, obtaining necessary legal documents, getting physicians to make written recommendations or assessments in a timely manner, reviewing inaccurate or incomplete admissions reports, making alternative arrangements when counties and tribes fail to pick up patients, and making arrangements for emergency admissions.

## **F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions include determining the accuracy and completeness of admissions documentation; whether the legal requirements for admission have been met and if appropriate action had been taken; determining the type of admission; advising community agencies to pursue involuntary admission versus voluntary hospitalization; releasing confidential information; what information is placed on commitment petitions, surgical permits, or interstate transfer applications; interpreting statutes, policies, and guidelines; personnel issues such as timekeeping, leave, PPARs, and recommendations for hire; and reviewing and drafting policies.

Decisions referred include admission referrals with serious physical handicaps, admissions with very serious legal charges, events where the threat of a lawsuit exists, final approval of policies, approval of travel requests, and budget preparation.

## **G. Contact with Others:**

Daily contact with mental health centers, private psychiatrists, social service agencies, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, mental health professionals, and private individuals regarding admissions referrals, commitments, planned discharges, upcoming hearings, and policies and procedures; law enforcement officials, attorneys, and judges regarding patients' legal background, hearings, discharges, and to obtain legal documents; mental health boards concerning admissions procedures and policies; and staff regarding admissions arrangements, interpretation of laws, and to obtain recommendations for commitment and treatment plans.

## **H. Working Conditions:**

Typical office environment.

## **I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- the principles and practices of mental illness and the laws, policies, and procedures pertaining to the rights of the patients' of admissions procedures;
- chemical dependency and mental illness diagnoses and disease processes;
- community resources;
- office procedures;
- effective methods of supervision.

Ability to:

- interpret laws and policies;
- maintain confidentiality;
- communicate legal information clearly and concisely;
- effectively plan and organize;
- develop, motivate, and provide leadership to staff;
- establish and maintain good relationships with staff, agencies, and patients.