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Commissioner

THOMAS E. SMITH, MD
Chief Medical Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: New York City Area Article 28/31 Directors of Psychiatry and Directors of Inpatient Psychiatry

FROM: Thomas Smith MD, NYS OMH Chief Medical Officer
Matthew Erlich MD, Medical Director, OMH State-Operated Services
Josh Berezin MD, Clinical Director, OMH New York City Field Office
Martha Carlin PsyD, Director, Long Island Field Office
Victoria DeSimone, Director, Hudson River Field Office

DATE: April 7, 2020

SUBJECT: Admissions to NYS OMH Downstate Adult Psychiatric Centers from NYC Area Article 28/31 Hospitals during the COVID-19 Emergency

The overall inpatient psychiatric capacity in Article 28/31 hospitals across New York City is decreasing, as hospitals consolidate and close inpatient units to meet the demand for increased medical capacity. The NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) will help preserve Article 28/31 inpatient capacity by: i) expediting existing referrals from Article 28/31 Inpatient units to State-Operated Psychiatric Centers (PCs); and ii) implementing additional procedures to process new referrals from NYC Article 28/31 inpatient units.

For patients who are **currently accepted to a PC and awaiting placement** or have a **current application pending determination**:

1. An OMH Central Office or PC representative will contact the identified Article 28/31 representative to gather any final documentation and discuss the transfer.
2. Article 28/31 staff should ensure required legal papers, the “Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Screening Form” (Attached), and any clinical updates are complete.
3. Article 28/31 hospital staff seeking more information or requesting an update should send an encrypted e-mail to Downstate.Referrals@omh.ny.gov, under the subject line “PC Patient Awaiting Placement.” Emails should include the patient’s name, date of birth, referring hospital, and accepting PC.

For new PC transfers:

1. Referrals, documentation submission, and questions regarding PC referrals will now be managed by OMH's Central Office.
2. Referral packets should include: the new "Direct Referral Form to NYS OMH Psychiatric Centers" (Attached); the "Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Screening Form" (Attached); and supplementary documents (i.e., medication list, clinical summary, legal forms), as indicated.
3. The completed referral packet should be sent, in a single PDF, to Downstate.Referrals@omh.ny.gov. Documents should be titled in the following format: Patient Initials. Referring Hospital. Date. (e.g., AB.HospitalName.04.07.20).
4. The OMH Central Office Admissions team will designate the application to a Downstate PC within 24 hours.

OMH is working with various partners to expand wraparound services, and other resources, to facilitate diversion and discharge from Article 28/31 inpatient services. Communication regarding those services will follow.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication as we work together to serve patients in need during this public health emergency.

CC: NYS OMH Exec Team
NYS OMH Senior Staff
NYS OMH Field Office Directors
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Grace Lee MD, Associate Commissioner
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