

RECOMMENDATION #21

EXPAND EXISTING COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL TO PREPARE A HEALTH CARE FACILITY TO RECEIVE AN INCOMING PATIENT FOR A PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

Under the *Mental Health Act*, physicians, justices of the peace, and police officers may interact with hospitals in order to protect people from harming themselves or others:

- A physician may make an application in the prescribed form for a psychiatric assessment of the person upon examination if there is reasonable cause to believe the person may harm self or others;
- Where information upon oath is brought before a justice of the peace that a person has or is at risk for harming self or others, the justice of the peace may issue an order in the prescribed form for the examination of the person by a physician;
- Where a police officer has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a person is acting or has acted in a disorderly manner and has reasonable cause to believe that the person may harm self or others, the police officer may take the person in custody to an appropriate place for examination by a physician.

When a person is suspected of, or evidence has been provided that, a person is at risk of harming self or others, and is brought to a hospital physician for assessment, notification to the hospital of the incoming patient is currently inconsistent. This means that the hospital may not be prepared to receive that person.

RECOMMENDED SOLUTION AND INTENDED OUTCOME

A framework to address this issue has been designed and is in use by Hamilton Health Sciences. The framework has been validated through evaluation.

This framework should be used to create a standard for Ontario's Hospitals in order to close the gap.