

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR DBHS

1) **Question:** I need mental health services. Where do I go?

Answer: Rehabilitative Services for Persons with Mental Illness (RSPMI) public and private outpatient Providers are located throughout the State of Arkansas. These agencies provide the full array of mental health services including individual therapy, case management and medication management. Please look under RSPMI Providers (in the related documents section of this website) for a complete list of public and private providers in the State of Arkansas. You can then call the RSPMI Provider and set up an appointment. If you don't have access to a computer or the internet, you can call the DBHS office at (501) 686-9465, and we can also give you the name of the Provider closest to you.

2) **Question:** I need mental health (and/or substance abuse treatment), but I have no insurance or way to pay for it. Is there any way I can still get help?

Answer: As part of their mission to insure appropriate mental and behavioral healthcare is available throughout the State of Arkansas, community mental health centers (CMHC) provide services for priority populations and persons with limited financial resources. Priority populations are served first and include Act 911 forensic patients (including those jailed and recently released) and patients certified as seriously emotionally disturbed or seriously mentally ill. Other patients are served as resources allow. These CMHCs provide a full array of services, including individual and group therapy, medication management and case management. Please refer to Community Mental Health Centers under Related Documents for the location of the mental health center in your area. It is possible that the CMHC may allow a reduced payment option for services.

The Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (OADAP) is responsible for administering the Arkansas Comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Treatment Plan. It contracts with local programs to establish an effective network of substance abuse services. OADAP also funds and oversees community treatment centers, drug and alcohol safety educational programs and prevention resource centers. In addition, OADAP serves as a referral service for treatment and prevention services. Please contact OADAP at (501) 686-9866 for more information regarding receiving treatment with limited financial resources.

3) **Question:** We live out of State but will soon be relocating to Arkansas. Can you tell me how we can continue to receive mental health/substance abuse services in Arkansas? How does this process work for in-state relocations? For instance, I live in one city in Arkansas but will be moving to another city soon. How would I continue to receive mental health/substance abuse services in-State?

Answer: This website contains a current database of all RSPMI public and private outpatient Providers in the State of Arkansas. If you know where you are re-locating, just click on RSPMI Providers on this website for a list of service sites by city or county. You can then call the community mental health center or RSPMI private provider and set up an appointment at your

convenience. If you don't have access to a computer or the internet, you can call the DBHS office at (501) 686-9465, and we can also give you the name of the Provider closest to your new location. You might also want to bring copies of your records (or sign a Release of Information), so you will have updated information for your new treatment provider.

The Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse would set up an interview with the potential client, obtain the required release of information forms, and upon review of all pertinent assessments, tests and observations, make a recommendation to the appropriate licensed treatment program for the appropriate service/s.

A list of all licensed treatment programs can be found on the website. Contained within the website you can find the location of the facility and the types of services offered.

- 4) **Question:** My adult son/daughter needs mental health (and/or substance abuse) treatment but refuses to go. What are my options?

Answer: If your son or daughter is a clear and present danger to self or others because of a mental illness or alcohol and/or drug abuse, they can be "committed". This involves a judge issuing an order that this person get an evaluation and/or treatment regardless of the person's agreement. The local Community Mental Health Center usually provides or supervises the treatment. The treatment can be inpatient (in a hospital) or outpatient (at a clinic). Arkansas law is very specific about the commitment process, and the dangerous behavior must be serious and also recent or an immediate threat. More information about the commitment process can be found on this (DBHS) website at Mental Health Commitment Law under Related Documents. You can also contact the Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (OADAP) to learn more about your options. OADAP's phone number is: (501) 686-9866.

You might also want to check into Psychiatric Advanced Directives. This is a legal instrument used to document a competent person's specific instructions or preferences regarding future mental health treatment, in preparation for the possibility that the person may lose capacity to give or withhold informed consent to treatment during acute episodes of psychiatric illness. More information about Psychiatric Advanced Directives can be found on this (DBHS) website under Related Documents.

- 5) **Question:** How can I help a family member or friend that is threatening to harm themselves?

Answer: The first step is to make sure they are safe. Call the police if you feel they are an immediate threat to do harm. If the threat is not immediate, there are other resources available to help you. The Arkansas Crisis Center has a 24-hour hotline with dedicated volunteers and staff members. Their phone number is 1-888-274-7472. The website is: www.arcrisis.org. You can also contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or TTY 1-800-799-4TTY (4889). You can also contact the local community mental health center or RSPMI private provider in your area. Each of these providers is required to have emergency/crisis services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Other suicide prevention resources are available at: www.arkansassuicidepreventionnetwork.org.

- 6) **Question:** How do I access mental health/substance abuse emergency services for a loved one when it is after regular business hours?

Answer: If your loved one is a current client of a public or private mental health provider, you should contact that agency first. All RSPMI outpatient Providers are required to have emergency services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If it is after regular business hours, you can check the DBHS website for a list of RSPMI Providers and accompanying phone numbers in your area. By calling the phone number at any time day or night, you should be able to access a live person who can help you or your loved one with the problem. If your emergency requires a face- to- face meeting, then all RSPMI Providers are required to perform this if clinically indicated. Also, if you know where a RSPMI clinic is located, all locations are required to have the emergency phone number posted in an easy accessible, public location.

For substance abuse emergencies, please use the emergency phone number that is furnished on the website. A qualified ATOD professional will make contact with the individual the next business day.

- 7) **Question:** They are releasing my adult family member from the hospital. I'm concerned about what this means for me and my family. Are there other placement options available?

Answer: Doctors (Hospitals) will not discharge a patient that is an imminent danger to themselves or others. Once a patient is stabilized and no longer a threat to their own or others' safety, then a doctor can discharge the patient. Hospital social workers are usually the ones that are responsible for discharge planning and finding the most appropriate placement for the patient before they are released from the hospital. If you have placement concerns for your loved one, we suggest you talk with the physician or social worker assigned to the case. You may even be able to request a family therapy session prior to discharge to further clarify your questions. Please note confidentiality laws are followed very closely by hospitals and other treatment facilities, so certain information may not be available to you upon your request.

- 8) **Question:** Are there any resources or support systems for family members or friends who have a significant other with mental illness and/or a substance abuse problem?

Answer: The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) is an excellent resource for family members or friends who have been affected by mental illness. NAMI is a nation-wide American advocacy group representing families and people affected by mental illness and have affiliates in every American state and in thousands of local communities in the country. NAMI's mission is to provide support, education, advocacy, and research for people and their families living with mental illness through various public education and awareness activities. More information about NAMI Arkansas can be found on this (DBHS) website under Related Links. NAMI Arkansas' toll free telephone number is: 1-800-844-0381.

Another excellent resource for family members and friends is the Arkansas Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council (AMHPAC). AMHPAC promotes a strong community based system of care for families with adults and children who have serious mental illnesses or emotional problems. The Council recognizes the need to use available resources in the best

possible ways to reach that goal. AMHPAC welcomes new members and seeks a variety of viewpoints in order to consider the needs of all. More information about AMHPAC can be found on this website at: _____. You can also call (501) 686-9167.

As referenced in answer #2, OADAP funds and oversees community treatment centers, drug and alcohol safety educational programs and prevention resource centers. In addition, OADAP serves as a referral service for treatment and prevention services. There is also a comprehensive list of locations and meeting times for AA, NA, CA and other similar self-help groups. Please contact OADAP at (501) 686-9866 for more information. You may also refer to the local newspaper/s.

9) **Question:** I'm out of psychotropic medications. What do I do?

Answer: Your first step would be to contact the physician who last prescribed the medication. If this is not possible, then you should schedule an appointment with a physician as soon as possible. Sometimes doctors are willing to write a prescription (for their current patient) until you can get in to see them, but this is not always the case. That is why it is very important that you keep all scheduled appointments with the physician and therapist, so they can be aware of how you are doing on the medicine and assess your daily functioning. If you are unable to keep an appointment with either the physician or therapist, make sure you call to cancel and reschedule the appointment(s), so you won't run out of your medicine.

10) **Question:** I have Medicaid insurance but no transportation to help me get to doctor's appointments. Are there transportation services available to help me?

Answer: Yes. You can call the Medicaid Transportation Helpline at 1-888-987-1200, and they should be able to assist you. You can also visit the Arkansas Medicaid Website for more information about Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) services. In addition, you can find more information about Medicaid transportation by clicking on Arkansas Medicaid under the Related Links on this website.

11) **Question:** May a behavioral health provider refuse to see a client?

Answer: There are several situations when a behavioral health provider may refuse to see a client based on appropriate clinical judgment. Examples of these situations may be: Non-payment for services, hostile or aggressive threats by the client toward clinic staff or repeated failures to keep appointments.

12) **Question:** I am dissatisfied with the treatment I received (or a family member received) at a mental health facility. What can I do?

Answer: All mental health facilities are required to have a process in place to deal with patient grievances. The designated person at the facility is typically called the Client Grievance Officer or Patient Advocate. If you have a specific complaint about how you were treated, the first step is to contact the Patient Advocate/Grievance Officer and file a formal complaint. You can also contact these facilities if you feel you (or a family member) have been treated unfairly or have a specific complaint concerning how your case (or your family member's case) has been handled.

Another option is to contact the Disability Rights Center (DRC). The DRC is the Protection and Advocacy system and Client Assistance Program for people with disabilities in Arkansas. Among its other duties, the DRC investigates allegations of abuse and neglect of persons with disabilities residing in facilities or in the community. The phone number for the DRC is: 1-800-482-1174 and the e-mail address is: www.arkdisabilityrights.org.

13) **Question:** I have a family member with a chronic mental illness that lives with me. As they are dependent on me to provide basic needs, is there any way I can get paid to care for them in my home?

Answer: Your family member may be eligible for services through a variety of different programs. A good place to start would be the Department of Human Services website: www.arkansas.gov/dhs (look under Aging and Adult Services Division). You can also call the Aging and Adult Services toll free phone number at: (866) 801-3435 to learn more about in home personal care options. Another good resource is the Center for Personal Assistance. That website is: www.pascenter.org.

14) **Question:** I would like to improve the mental health system in the State of Arkansas. How can I help?

Answer: There are several organizations that might be a good starting point in your efforts to be involved in system transformation. The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (referenced in answer #8) is one of these. The Arkansas Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council (also referenced in answer #8) is another good resource. More information about NAMI and AMHPAC can be found on this website under Adult Services/Advocacy.

15) **Question:** How do I apply for a practicum or internship with DBHS?

Answer: There are various opportunities for practicums or internships with DBHS. For master level social workers in a clinical track program, you may contact the Social Work Department at the Arkansas State Hospital (ASH) 501-686-9074.

Other /practicums/internships may be available for students interested in the administrative and regulatory process of behavioral health. For information regarding those programs contact: Children's Services (501) 686-9489 or Adult Services (501) 683-6972.

DBHS also offers residency opportunities for psychologists and psychiatrists. For more information about these programs call (501) 686-9034.

16) **Question:** How can I track or receive the records of my family member from providers of mental health services?

Answer: If your family member is a minor or has a legal guardian appointed by a court, then the guardian of the person may request the records from a mental health provider. If your family member is an adult with no guardian, then it is important to understand that there is a federal law that protects an individual's health related information. That law is called the Health Insurance

Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA. Health providers cannot release any information regarding an individual's treatment unless the individual gives signed consent to do so. It is possible to ask your family member to sign an informed consent to give the information to a specific party. If your family member refuses, then the information cannot be released.

17) **Question:** I have lost contact with a family member with mental illness for the last several years (or longer), and I would like to check up on them and see how they are doing. How do I find out where they are?

Answer: DBHS does not have direct access to patient information or whereabouts. You may want to contact a service that specializes in finding missing or lost family members.