

## **HOUSING PRACTICE GUIDELINE**

NOTE: Replicated from the MDCH Housing Guideline as included in the Public Mental Health Manual, Volume III, Section 1708, Subject GL-05, Chapter 07-C, Dated 2/14/95.

### **I. SUMMARY**

This guideline establishes policy and procedure for ensuring that the provision of mental health services and supports are not affected by where consumers choose to live: their own home, the home of another or in a licensed setting. In those instances when public money helps subsidize a consumer's living arrangement, the housing unit selected by the consumer shall comply with applicable occupancy standards.

### **II. APPLICATION**

- A. Psychiatric hospitals operated by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH).
- B. Regional centers for developmental disabilities operated by MDCH.
- C. Special facilities operated by MDCH.
- D. Residential placement agencies operated by MDCH.
- E. Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSPs) as specified in their master contract with MDCH.

### **III. POLICY**

The Michigan Department of Community Health recognizes housing to be a basic need and affirms the right of all consumers of public mental health services to pursue housing options of their choice. Just as consumers living in licensed dependent settings may require many different types of services and supports, persons living in their own homes or sharing their household with another may have similar service needs. RMHA's shall foster the provision of services and supports independent of where the consumer resides.

When requested, RMHAs shall educate consumers about the housing options and supports available, and assist consumers in locating habitable, safe, and affordable housing. The process of locating suitable housing shall be directed by the consumer's interests, involvement and informed choice. Independent housing arrangements in which the cost of housing is subsidized by the RMHA are to be secured with a lease or deed in the consumer's name.

This policy is not intended to subvert or prohibit occupancy in or participation with community based treatment settings such as an adult foster care home when needed by an individual recipient.

#### **IV. DEFINITIONS**

**Affordable:** is a condition that exists when an individual's means or the combined household income of several individuals is sufficient to pay for food, basic clothing, health care, and personal needs and still have enough left to cover all housing related costs including rent/mortgage, utilities, maintenance, repairs, insurance and property taxes. In situations where there are insufficient resources to cover both housing costs and basic living costs, individual housing subsidies may be used to bridge the gap when they are available.

**Habitable and safe:** means those housing standards established in each community that define and require basic conditions for tenant/resident health, security, and safety.

**Housing:** refers to dwellings that are typical of those sought out and occupied by members of a community. The choices a consumer of mental health services makes in meeting his or her housing needs are not to be linked in any way to any specific program or support service needs he or she may have.

**Responsible Mental Health Agency (RMHA):** means the MDCH hospital, center or CMHSP responsible for providing and contracting for mental health services and/or arranging and coordinating the provision of other services to meet the consumers needs.

#### **V. STANDARDS**

RMHAs shall develop policies and create mechanisms that give predominant consideration to consumers' choice in selecting where and with whom they live. These policies and mechanisms shall also:

A. Ensure that RMHA-supported housing blends into the community. Supported housing units are to be scattered throughout a building, a complex, or the community in order to achieve community integration when possible. Use of self-contained campuses or otherwise segregated buildings as service sites is not the preferred mode.

B. Promote and support home ownership, individual choice, and autonomy. The number of people who live together in RMHA-supported housing shall not exceed the community's norms for comparable living settings.

C. Assure that any housing arranged or subsidized by the RMHA is accessible to the consumer and in compliance with applicable state and local standards for occupancy, health, and safety.

- D. Be sensitive to the consumer's cultural and ethnic preferences and give consideration to them.
- E. Encourage and support the consumer's self-sufficiency.
- F. Provide for ongoing assessment of the consumer's housing needs.
- G. Provide assistance to consumers in coordinating available resources to meet their basic housing needs. RMHAs may give consideration to the use of housing subsidies when consumers have a need for housing that cannot be met by the other resources which are available to them.

## **VI. REFERENCES AND LEGAL AUTHORITY**

MCL 330.1116(j).

## **VII. EXHIBITS**

Federal Housing Subsidy Quality Standards based on 24 CFR § 882.10