

**AMHS**  
**ED Rapid Response Disposition Procedure**  
March 2006

**Rapid Response Disposition Planning for Patients in Emergency Departments**

**Purpose**

This procedure is intended to enable appropriate evaluation and placement of adults with mental illness who present to community and private psychiatric hospitals with psychiatric or behavioral problems when there are no psychiatric beds available. This rapid response procedure will be initiated when any of the following occur:

1. All calls made by the crisis team have been returned and no beds are available.
2. Eight hours have passed since the patient has arrived at the ED regardless of the status of referral calls
3. An adult presents after 8 p.m. and there has not been a positive disposition by the following morning at 10 a.m.

**Procedure**

- The individual presents to the ED and undergoes medical clearance and a crisis evaluation. A decision is made regarding the appropriate disposition.
- If transfer to an acute inpatient unit is determined to be needed, the crisis worker pursues admission to a behavioral health unit.
- The person will remain in the ED at the hospital until appropriate disposition has been made.
- In the event any of the three events described above occur:
  - The ED triage nurse will initiate a call/communicate with the appropriate crisis worker that the Rapid Response Procedure is being initiated.
  - The ED triage nurse will contact the hospital's Rapid Response Team members.
  - The crisis worker will initiate calls to all team participants external to the hospital.
- The Rapid Response Team may include the ED physician, ED nurse, crisis worker and crisis manager, consultant psychiatrist, other providers, DHHS representatives, Hospital administrative representative, and guardians.
- A meeting of the team will be initiated at the hospital as soon as possible with as many participants as possible. Participants who are unable to get to the hospital will participate by phone.
- The purpose of the meeting is to develop a plan for disposition of the patient to a behavioral health unit or if appropriate due to a change in presentation to a crisis unit or some other community placement.
- The emergency department provider and the crisis worker will be responsible to implement the disposition.
- The crisis worker is responsible for notifying the community support worker, if not already involved, by the next business day.

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