



# North Sound Mental Health Administration

Regional Support Network for Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties  
*Improving the mental health and well being of individuals and families in our communities*

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NSMHA Contract Memorandum 2012-010

Date: August 1, 2012

To: Hospital Emergency Department Directors  
Regional Hospital Inpatient Committee

From: Greg Long, Deputy Director and Sandy Whitcutt, Quality Specialist

Subject: Memorandum to clarify the professional role of the Community Mental Health System's Emergency Mental Health Clinicians (EMHC) and Designated Mental Health Professionals DMHP in Emergency Departments.

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Please see attached memorandum clarifying the professional roles of Community Mental Health System's EMHC and DMHP in Emergency Departments when dispatched.

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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Emergency Room Directors

**FROM:** Greg Long, Deputy Director, NSMHA, Sandy Whitcutt, Quality Specialist, NSMHA

**SUBJECT:** Role of Emergency Mental health Clinician and Designated Mental Health Professional in the Emergency Department

**DATE:** AUGUST 1, 2012

**CC:** ICRS

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This memo is intended to clarify the professional role of the Community Mental Health System's Emergency Mental Health Clinicians (EMHC) and Designated Mental Health Professionals DMHP in Emergency Departments when there is a dispatch request by the ED staff for the EMHC and DMHP to see a patient of the Emergency Department presenting with a mental health crisis.

### **Background**

North Sound Mental Health Administration (NSMHA) oversees voluntary and involuntary crisis response services for mental health in the North Sound Region (Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties). The DMHPs have the authority in the State of Washington to detain people who are dangerous to themselves or others or gravely disabled due to a mental disorder.

### **EMHC and DMHP Roles**

When an individual is in an emergency room and thus a patient of the hospital, the EMHC's and DMHP's role is a mental health consultant to the ED staff. These specialty consultations can include:

- Mental health diagnostic clarification,
- Risk and safety assessments,
- Treatment recommendations,
- Recommendations for discharge planning,
- DMHPs conduct involuntary investigations

The EMHC and DMHP can provide the ED staff with the results of the consultation. Discharge planning should continue to be determined by the ED staff for the individual is a patient of the hospital.

If a DMHP has completed an Involuntary Evaluation and has made a decision to detain the patient of the hospital, the DMHP will follow the protocols as defined in RCW 71.05 and RCW 71.34.

If you have any questions regarding this memo, please feel free to contact me at NSMHA at 360-416-7013 or at [sandy\\_whitcutt@nsmha.org](mailto:sandy_whitcutt@nsmha.org).