

Admitting Requirements

The Consumer must have a documented psychiatric condition (per the current DSM) and meet General Admission Criteria. The Mental Health Screener is responsible for determining whether admission criteria are met. Qualifying (and disqualifying) considerations are specific, as follows:

General Admission Criteria

The following criteria may constitute justification for admission if they interfere with the Consumer's ability to care for self and/or dependents without the structure of a psychiatric hospital. Symptoms of feelings and behaviors should be severe enough to threaten self, others and/or property (where likely property damage is considered substantial):

Abnormal thinking –

- Paranoid thinking
- Ideas of reference
- Loss of reality testing
- Loss of time concept
- Confusion or incoherence

Abnormal perceptions –

- Auditory hallucinations
- Visual hallucinations
- Inability to recognize familiar people
- Other sensory hallucinations

Abnormal feelings (may include) –

- Severe depression likely to cause a suicide attempt
- Anger and/or rage that provoke feelings of wanting to harm others
- Unusual fear, anxiety, and/or panic likely to cause self-injury

Abnormal behavior (may include) –

- Suicide threats or attempts of a serious nature
- Homicidal threats or attempts of a serious nature
- Self-care failure due to interference with judgment that may cause self-injury or aggravate illness
- Mutism or catatonia that makes it impossible to assess the patient without hospital admission
- Mania
- Failure of self care

For more details, see Section I ("Guidelines for Determining if a Person can be Admitted to a State Psychiatric Hospital") in The Mental Health Screening and Discharge Planning Handbook.

Disqualifying Conditions

Diversion treatment should be pursued if any of the following are identified (as a primary diagnosis) during a formal mental health screening:

Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities

State hospitals may be inappropriate for Consumers with significant developmental or cognitive challenges, unless serious psychiatric symptoms are the primary reason for screening. Consumers with lower cognitive functioning may not be able to participate in the treatment milieu and are more likely to be exploited by peers.

Specialized Medical/Nursing Care Needs

A Consumer must be medically stable outside of a medical or nursing facility in order to admit for secure inpatient hospitalization; a medical examination by a physician or doctor-to-doctor consult may be required. This includes the Consumer who requires significant medical care or treatment unrelated to or independent of any psychiatric symptoms.

Examples of specialized medical services that are beyond the capacity of state psychiatric hospitals include but are not limited to:

- Intravenous catheters, ports, or permanent venous access; foley catheters, intravenous medications, and/or Intravenous fluids
- Dialysis
- Intensive care services
- Ventilators
- Services associated with total nursing care (i.e., patient confined to bed, cannot feed self, requires toileting assistance)
- Wound care (depends on wound severity and care extent required)

The need for other services generally provided in a medical hospital or nursing home should be discussed with the state hospital physician before referral.

Conduct Disorder, Antisocial Traits

Consumers whose sole diagnosis is conduct disorder or antisocial personality traits are ineligible for state hospitalization, unless the Consumer is experiencing an acute psychiatric crisis that poses a danger to self or others.

For more details, see Section J ("Divisions from State Psychiatric Hospitalization") in The Mental Health Screening and Discharge Planning Handbook.

Indicators that Hospitalization may be Inappropriate

Generally speaking, secure psychiatric hospitalization is inappropriate in the following circumstances:

Invalid Screen

Admission requires a formal evaluation by a Qualified Mental Health Professional with specialized Screener training. A screen performed by a non-CMHC affiliated Licensed Mental Health Professional or therapist in private practice is considered invalid.

Homelessness

Sometimes, a screening request involves an individual whose primary need involves housing (referred to in the child welfare system as “placement”).

Non-Acute Psychiatric Needs

The Consumer must be experiencing serious acute psychiatric needs that constitute a mental health crisis for admission. Less restrictive treatment alternatives are more appropriate for non-acute, non-crisis circumstances.

Extreme Sexual Acting Out

Consumers are not eligible for admission on the basis of extreme sexual acting out. This includes instances in which the behavior is harmful to self or others. However, admission may be appropriate if the behavior is directly related to psychiatric symptoms and the Consumer meets other required criteria (e.g., acute, serious psychiatric distress, etc.).

For more details, see Section K ("Indicators that Hospitalization may be Inappropriate") in The Mental Health Screening and Discharge Planning Handbook.