

**2025 PolicySource<sup>TM</sup>**  
**Behavioral Health Care and  
Human Services**

**Policy<sup>TM</sup>  
Source**

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# Table of Contents

- Some items in the Table of Contents are indicated as “updated” or “new.” This means that these policies and procedures (P&Ps) have been updated or created since the previous edition of *PolicySource*. These changes reflect updates in the Joint Commission standards and elements of performance for behavioral health care and human services accreditation. **Note:** All P&Ps have been updated to improve accessibility.
- Those items with a paperclip icon  are not P&Ps themselves but supplementary materials or attachments for a particular P&P. Not every P&P has such attachments, but that does not prohibit someone using *PolicySource* to create their own ancillary materials for any of their own P&Ps.

<b>Introduction to <i>PolicySource</i></b> .....	1
--	---

## Sample Policies and Procedures for Behavioral Health Care and Human Services Organizations

<b>Care, Treatment, and Services</b> .....	22
--	----

- [Eligibility and Screening Procedures](#)
- [Policy for Admission to Maintenance Treatment](#)
- [Waiting List Management Policy](#)
- [Comprehensive Assessment and Reassessment Procedures](#)
- [History and Physical Screening Procedures](#)
- [Procedures for Patient Health Screening and History and Physical Examination for Residential Care](#)
- [Drug Testing Policy for Individuals with Addictions](#)
- [Safety Check of Unlicensed Alternative Care Providers Policy](#)
- [Child Welfare Policy for Reports of Abuse or Neglect](#)
- [Plan for Care, Treatment, or Services Development Policy](#)
-  [Treatment Plan Template](#)
- [Discharge Planning Policy](#)
- [Medically Supervised Withdrawal Against Medical Advice Policy](#)
- [Outcomes of Care, Treatment, or Services Measurement Procedures](#)
- [Policy on the Role of Education in Care, Treatment, and Services for Children or Youth](#)
- [Visitation Plan Development Policy for Child Welfare](#)
- [Emergency Management Plan for Outdoor/Wilderness Experiences](#)
- [Resuscitation Services Policy](#)
- [Medical Emergency Procedures](#)
- [Exclusionary Time-Out Policy](#)
- [Individualized Behavioral Contingencies Policy](#)
- **UPDATED!** [Restraint and Seclusion Policy](#)
-  **UPDATED!** [Restraint and Seclusion Decision Checklist](#)
- **NEW!** [Care Coordination Procedures for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics](#)
- [Plan for Providing Prevention and Wellness Promotion Services](#)

<b>Environment of Care</b>	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Environment of Care Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Environmental Safety and Security Risk Identification Procedures</a></li> <li>• <b>NEW!</b> <a href="#">Workplace Violence Prevention Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Smoke-Free Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Foster Care Environment Safety Assessment Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Foster Home Safety Checklist</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fire Response Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fire Drill Procedures</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Infection Control During Construction Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Infection Control Measures Evaluation Worksheet</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Medical Equipment Failure Response Procedures</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Environment of Care Management Plan Annual Evaluation Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Utility System Disruption Response Procedures</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Emergency Backup for Medication Refrigeration Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Emergency Backup for Medication Dispensing Equipment Policy</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Emergency Management</b>	27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NEW!</b> <a href="#">Plan for Identifying Potential Emergencies</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Emergency Management Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Emergency Communications Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedures for Tracking Individuals Served During an Emergency</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Human Resources Management</b>	28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NEW!</b> <a href="#">Staffing Plan for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Staff Qualifications Verification Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Staff Orientation Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ongoing Education and Training Policy</a></li> <li>• <b>NEW!</b> <a href="#">Staff Competency Assessment Policy for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Infection Prevention and Control</b>	29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hand Hygiene Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Infection Prevention and Control Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Procedures</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Influx of Potentially Infectious Individuals Response Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Staff Influenza Vaccination Policy</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Information Management</b>	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Information Systems Interruption Management Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Privacy and Security of Clinical/Case Information Policy</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Leadership</b>	31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Code of Conduct Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Child Welfare Worker Safety Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">System or Process Failure Response Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy for Gender-Specific Treatment in Opioid Treatment Programs</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Follow-Up Care of New Mothers and Well-Baby Care Policy</a></li> </ul>	

- [Assessing Placement for Appropriate Level of Care Policy](#)
- [Inpatient Withdrawal Management Policy](#)
- [Nondiscriminatory Policy for Selection of Foster Care Parents in Child Welfare](#)
- [Procedures for Reporting and Addressing Abuse in Foster Care](#)
- [Procedures for Follow-Up in Child Welfare Reunification Cases](#)
- **NEW!** [Sliding-Scale Fee Schedule and Eligibility Policy for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Community Relations Plan for Opioid Treatment Programs](#)
- **NEW!** [Protocols for Providing Access to Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Services](#)

## **Life Safety** ..... 33

- [Life Safety Code® Building Assessment Policy](#)
- [Interim Life Safety Measures Policy](#)
- [Life Safety Code® Deficiencies Policy](#)

## **Medication Management** ..... 34

- [Accessibility of Information About the Individual Served Policy](#)
- [High-Alert and Hazardous Medication Management Policy](#)
- [Opioid Treatment Program High-Alert Medications Inventory](#)
- [Psychotropic Medication Management Policy](#)
- [Medication Outage or Shortage Substitution Protocols](#)
- [Medication Control Policy](#)
- [Medication Orders Policy](#)
- [Plan for Emergency Administration of Medication in Opioid Treatment Programs](#)
- [Recalled Medication Management Policy](#)
- [Self-Administered Medications Policy](#)
- [Individual Medication Log](#)
- [Take-Home Medications Policy for Opioid Treatment Programs](#)
- [Chain of Custody for Take-Home Medications in Opioid Treatment Programs](#)
- [Investigational Medications Management Policy](#)
- [Medication Event Response Policy](#)
- [Medication Event Incident Report](#)
- [Automatic Dispensing Cabinets Override Review Policy](#)

## **National Patient Safety Goals** ..... 36

- [Medication Reconciliation Policy](#)
- **UPDATED!** [Suicide Risk Management and Prevention Policy](#)
- [UPDATED! Suicide Risk Assessment Form](#)
- [Procedures for Counseling and Follow-Up Care for Individuals at Risk of Suicide After Discharge](#)
- [Plan for Improving Health Care Equity](#)

## **Performance Improvement** ..... 37

- **UPDATED!** [Performance Improvement Plan](#)

## **Record of Care, Treatment, and Services** ..... 38

- [Clinical/Case Record Timeliness Policy](#)
- [Clinical/Case Record Retention Policy](#)

<b>Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual</b> .....	39
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Rights of the Individual Served Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Visitor Policy During Infectious Disease Surge</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Visitor Prescreening Checklist (COVID-19)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Informed Consent Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Advance Directives/Psychiatric Advance Directives Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Complaint Resolution Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Personal Advocate Provision Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rights of Individuals Served Who Work at the Organization</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rights of Individuals in Foster Care Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rights of the Family of Origin in Child Welfare Policy</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Waived Testing</b> .....	41
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Waived Testing Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Waived Testing Competency Assessment Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Waived Testing Quality Control Policy</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Resources</b> .....	42
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Applicability Grids</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">General Sources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Plan Template</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy and Procedures Evaluation Checklist</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy and Procedures Inventory Template</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Policy Template</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Procedures Template</a></li> <li>• <b>UPDATED!</b> <a href="#">Required Written Documentation Chapter for CAMBHC</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scoring Rubric to Assess P&amp;Ps</a></li> </ul>	

## Discharge Planning Policy

[Logo]	<b>TITLE</b> Discharge Planning Policy		<b>IDENTIFICATION NUMBER</b>
<b>ORGANIZATION(S)</b>	<b>LEVEL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> System <input type="checkbox"/> Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Division <input type="checkbox"/> Department	<b>CATEGORY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical <input type="checkbox"/> Management <input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory	<b>POSTING DATE</b>  <b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>
<b>REVIEW CYCLE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years <b>LAST REVIEW DATE:</b>		<b>REPLACES TITLE:</b> Discharge Planning Policy <b>EFFECTIVE DATE(S):</b>	

### APPLICABILITY

This policy correlates to Joint Commission standards. However, it is not tied to a documentation requirement. See [Applicability Grids](#) for applicable services and settings.

### POLICY STATEMENT

Discharge and transfers are planned to meet the specific needs of the individual served and to provide appropriate information and guidance to support continued health and safety.

### PURPOSE

To define the process for planning an individual's discharge or transfer from the organization to ensure individuals stay in the organization no longer than is necessary and to facilitate a continuum of care following the individual's discharge or transfer.

### SCOPE

Applies to all individuals served by the organization.

### DEFINITIONS

**Discharge instructions** – Any directions the individual served must follow upon discharge or transfer to attend to any residual conditions that need to be addressed personally by the individual served, family/caregivers, peer support, home care attendants, or other clinicians on an outpatient basis.

**Discharge planning** – A formalized process in an organization through which the need for a program or services of continuing and follow-up care, treatment, and services is ascertained and, if warranted, initiated for each individual served.

**Discharge summary** – A summary that provides relevant clinical and/or nonclinical information and instructions. It contains the following information, as applicable to the individual served:

- Name of the individual served
- Provider's contact information
- Date(s) and location of services
- Updated medication list, if applicable
- Updated vitals, if applicable
- Reason(s) for services
- Key assessment findings, services provided, and plan for follow-up services
- Discharge instructions that are based on care, treatment, and services discussions that took place during the delivery of services



- Medications and/or immunizations administered during the visit
- Time and location of next appointment/testing, if scheduled
- Recommended appointment time, if next appointment/testing is not scheduled
- List of other appointments and tests the individual needs to schedule, including contact information
- Recommended decision aids for the individual served
- Laboratory and other diagnostic test orders
- Test/laboratory results, if received within 24 hours after the visit
- Description of community resources or referrals given to the individual served

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Care, Treatment, and Services (CTS) Committee is responsible for overseeing this policy.

Staff members who participate in care, treatment, and services activities are responsible for creating and managing plans for discharge, transfer, or termination of care, treatment, or services.

The Health Information Management department is responsible for managing the storage and transmission of planning information related to discharge, transfer, or termination of care, treatment, or services.

## **PROCEDURES**

The appropriate staff member does the following:

1. Initiates the planning process for discharge or transfer at admission.
2. Determines and describes the conditions under which the individual served will be discharged or transferred.
3. Documents assessment of the needs of the individual served in the clinical/case record.
4. Identifies individuals who will require additional support with discharge or transfer plans. This decision may be based on assessment of the individual as well as information provided by the individual's family, psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, nurse, social work case manager, or anyone else who is familiar with the individual and his or her capabilities.
5. Assesses the individual's discharge or transfer needs at admission, throughout his or her stay, and at the time of discharge or transfer.
6. Considers the following when evaluating the individual's discharge or transfer:
  - Needs, strengths, preferences, and goals
  - Cognitive status
  - Functional status
  - Family structure
  - Primary caretaker
  - Financial status
  - Transportation availability
  - Necessity and availability of medical supplies and/or equipment
  - Living arrangements
  - Community resources (for example, substance use treatment programs, support groups)
  - Referrals to other disciplines or services (for example, nutrition, peer support, physical therapy)
  - Potential barriers to successful discharge or transfer, including (as applicable):
    - Co-occurring illnesses
    - Cognitive and communicative disorders
    - Developmental disabilities

- Vision or hearing disabilities
  - Physical disabilities
  - Social and environmental factors
7. Discusses the criteria and process for the individual's expected successful discharge or transfer with the individual served.
  8. Addresses the following elements of the process of discharge or transfer with the individual served:
    - How the individual is discharged
    - How the individual is transferred to another provider, organization, program, or service
    - Reason(s) for transfer or discharge
    - How internal and external transfers work
    - Who is responsible for the individual's safety and well-being during transfer
  9. Discusses plans for discharge or transfer with the individual's consent with her or her family/legal guardian.
  10. Creates a discharge summary, as defined in this policy, that is customized for the individual served.
  11. Provides the individual served with the discharge summary, including discharge instructions, at the time of discharge or transfer. This should include information about how responsibility for the individual's care, treatment, and services will be shifted to different individuals or entities, including but not limited to the individual served, another clinician or physician, or another organization.
  12. Provides the individual served with alternatives to discharge or transfer.
  13. Description of community resources or referrals given to the individual served
  14. Arranges any postdischarge or post-transfer mental health services with the individual served or his or her family, respecting his or her expressed preferences when possible.
  15. Provides the individual served or his or her family with relevant information about how responsibility for his or her care has shifted.
  16. Provides, when possible, postdischarge or post-transfer mental health providers with relevant information, following organization policies on confidentiality, privacy, and security of health information.

The Health Information Management department does the following:

1. Incorporates any paper documentation accumulated during the individual's stay into his or her clinical/case record no later than two days following discharge or transfer.
2. Forwards copies of the following documents to the external primary care location (or other practitioners) for the individual served, as necessary and in accordance with relevant privacy policies, laws, and regulations:
  - Final progress note
  - Discharge summary
  - Relevant reports and records

## **REFERENCES**

*Joint Commission Standard CTS.03.01.03, EP 2.* The plan for care, treatment, or services includes the following:

- Goals that are expressed in a manner that captures the individual's words or ideas
- Goals that build on the individual's strengths
- Factors that support the transition to community integration when identified as a need during assessment

- The criteria and process for the individual’s expected successful transfer and/or discharge/termination of services, which the organization discusses with the individual

*Joint Commission Standard CTS.06.02.01.* Continuity of care, treatment, or services is maintained when an individual served is transferred or after discharge/termination of care, treatment, or services.

*Joint Commission Standard CTS.06.02.01, EP 1.* The organization has a process for addressing the continuity of care, treatment, or services after transfer, discharge, or termination of care, treatment or services that includes the following:

- The transfer of responsibility for care, treatment, or services for the individual served
- The reason(s) for transfer, discharge, or termination of care, treatment or services
- Mechanisms for internal and external transfer
- Identification of the person who has accountability and responsibility for the safety and well-being of the individual served during a transfer

*Joint Commission Standard CTS.06.02.03.* When an individual served is transferred, discharged, or care, treatment, or services are terminated, the organization bases the decision on the assessed needs of the individual and the organization's capabilities.

*Joint Commission Standard CTS.06.02.05.* Pertinent information related to care, treatment, or services is exchanged with other providers when an individual served is transferred or discharged or care, treatment, or services are terminated.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Confidentiality and Security of Health Information Policy

#### **APPROVAL**

<b>NAME AND CREDENTIALS</b>	<b>NAME AND CREDENTIALS</b>	
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	
<b>SIGNATURE</b>		<b>DATE</b>
<b>SIGNATURE</b>		<b>DATE</b>