

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on the Need to Maintain Intermediate- and Long-Term Inpatient Care Access for People with Serious Mental Illness

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“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

While there have been significant gains made toward increased community resources for people with serious mental illness, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) views with concern the trend toward reducing the capacity to provide intermediate- and long-term inpatient psychiatric care to people with serious mental illness.

Administrative pressures to transition patients from inpatient to community settings prematurely can result in suboptimal or inappropriate placements. Inappropriate dispositions may include placements in correctional facilities, skilled nursing facilities, or boarding homes, and a portion of patients become, or remain, undomiciled. For these individuals, a cycle of high utilization of emergency room services and/or acute inpatient psychiatric services may ensue.

Intermediate- and long-term inpatient care settings can play a critical role in needs assessments around safety and community support for individuals who are transitioning from inpatient to community settings.

Community mental health centers and other community resources are already under pressure to make stringent choices in distributing finite resources toward supporting those for whom a community-based level of care is most appropriate.

APA Position:

- 1. Intermediate- and long-term inpatient treatment and care, as part of a full spectrum of service levels, remain readily accessible to people with serious mental illness who require such levels of service.**
- 2. Community mental health centers, integrated healthcare centers, and allied community resources require sufficient funding and staffing to provide comprehensive**

wraparound services to people with serious mental illness who can successfully reside in their communities when receiving such services.

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