

# MENTAL HEALTH & RECOVERY SERVICES BOARD OF LUCAS COUNTY

Designation of Health Officers

COQ: V-A.26; X-A.3  
Effective Date: 12/1/16  
Supersedes Date: 3/1/14

## POLICY

The Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (MHRSB) of Lucas County will establish a process to credential and designate certain key agency staff to serve Lucas County as Health Officers, as defined in O.R.C. 5122.01(J) to facilitate emergency hospitalization as described in O.R.C. 5122.10. In order to serve as a Board appointed Health Officer, an appropriately credentialed person must be sponsored by a certified agency that accepts full responsibility for the officer's training, supervision, performance and reporting. MHRSB requires that each sponsoring agency enter into a written agreement with the Board to define those responsibilities as well as other pertinent issues including, but not limited to, record retention, incident reporting, maintenance of insurance, and indemnification.

Accordingly:

- 1) MHRSB will establish minimum qualifications to serve as a health officer, and rules related to appointment, terms, and removal from office.
- 2) MHRSB will promulgate a description of the responsibilities of appointed Health Officers.
- 3) MHRSB's Director of Programs & Services (or designee) will facilitate a process to review both new and renewal applications for Health Officers to ensure that the applicants meet the minimum qualifications. The Director will make recommendations as appropriate for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- 4) MHRSB will annually review a report of Health Officer activity.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

MHRSB Chair, Executive Director

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**PROCEDURE**

**Health Officer Qualifications and Requirements**

- 1) An applicant for appointment by MHR SB as a Health Officer, must be sponsored by an OMHAS-certified agency whose chief executive officer has signed his/her assurance that the applicant represents the agency and that the agency assures that it has/will provide the training, supervision, and support outlined below. The agency sponsoring the application must provide MHR SB with a copy of their written policy that governs the activity and supervision of the Health Officer.
- 2) Health Officers must meet criteria established under the State of Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services Qualified Provider Rules of the Administrative Code, Section 5122-29-10(B)(3) governing provider qualifications for crisis intervention mental health service.
- 3) Agency employees recommended for designation as a Health Officer shall:
  - a) Have two (2) years of experience in assessment of persons with severe mental illness, and possess appropriate professional licensure (LISW, LPCC, RN-MSN); or
  - b) Be a registered nurse with three (3) years of experience in assessment of individuals with severe mental illness; or
  - c) Be a licensed mental health professional (LSW/LPC) with three (3) years of experience in assessment of individuals with severe mental illness.
- 4) An agency applying to MHR SB to have an employee designated for the first time as a Health Officer shall submit:
  - a) The MHR SB Health Officer Application (Form A);
  - b) Copies of professional licenses, registrations and/or certificates;
  - c) At least two written references, which comment on the person's ability to assess individuals with serious mental illness. One of these letters must be external to the sponsoring agency;
  - d) A criminal record check from the Bureau of Criminal Investigation dated within six months of application; and

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- e) Verification that the employee has completed training approved by the Board with curriculum which, at a minimum, shall address the following subjects:
  - Training in O.R.C. pertaining to involuntary mental health treatment which includes understanding of major mental illness and assessing for risk and vulnerability, and training regarding appropriate utilization of community resources;
  - Training in first aid, CPR, and universal precautions for infection control;
  - Training in non-violent physical crisis intervention; and
  - (Separate trainings are not required when the candidate's credentialing already indicates a proficiency).
- 5) MHR SB staff will review the application, and if it meets the criteria, will recommend the appointment to the Board of Trustees for approval. If approved, the sponsoring agency shall be notified in writing of the designation and term of each Health Officer. Although the MHR SB designates Health Officers for a specified two-year period, for an initial appointment, the term will be provisional for six months. During that time, the candidate for Health Officer will be supervised by a psychiatrist, licensed clinical psychologist, licensed physician, or an MHR SB designated Health Officer. The supervision should include the candidate both observing and being observed during the process of taking into custody a person that is believed to be mentally ill and subject to court order. After six months, the sponsoring agency's clinical director may petition in writing to have the applicant moved from a provisional status to active status.
- 6) At the expiration of a Health Officer's two-year term, a sponsoring agency may apply for renewal of the certification by:
  - a) At least 60-days prior to the expiration of term, complete the MHR SB Health Officer renewal application (Form B) for review by MHR SB staff; and
  - b) Provide a summary of the applicant's performance as a Health Officer (a Health Officer requesting renewal must have performed a minimum two (2) field assessments in the previous term). If not, a written letter from the sponsoring agency's clinical director stating that the Health Officer remains competent in clinical assessment for involuntary hospitalizations must be included in the application.
- 7) A Health Officer designation may be revoked at any time at the sole discretion of the Executive Director of the MHR SB upon written notice to the sponsoring agency. A designation as a Health Officer shall automatically expire if the designee terminates

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employment with the sponsoring agency unless transfer status within the system is endorsed by the receiving agency's executive director; all required information and training must be current and the application approved by MHR SB. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring agency's clinical or executive director to notify the MHR SB of any Health Officers who terminate employment.

- 8) Any complaints or grievances pertaining to a Health Officer's performance of duties shall be handled as follows:
  - a) The sponsoring agency shall conduct a thorough investigation and prepare a written report of the complaint or grievance. The written report of the investigation and its findings along with any action taken by the agency shall be submitted to the MHR SB Executive Director with a copy to the MHR SB Client Rights Officer for review. Such report shall be submitted within 20 days of the complaint or grievance, and be consistent with the Board's Client Rights and Grievance Policy.
  - b) The MHR SB requires that any agency that requests an employee be designated as a Health Officer pursuant to this policy shall execute an indemnification agreement with MHR SB that is ongoing, requiring no renewal, and remains in force as long as the agency has currently certified Health Officers.
- 9) MHR SB requires a quarterly Quality Assurance Report for Health Officers from each sponsoring agency. The report will include: the number of assessments requested; the number of assessments performed; the number of involuntary applications completed; and the final disposition of the clients that were evaluated.

### **Responsibilities of Health Officers**

A person designated as a Health Officer by MHR SB is empowered to evaluate, take into custody, and facilitate transportation to an appropriate facility, persons whom they believe to be mentally ill and who represent a substantial risk of physical harm to himself or others if allowed to remain at liberty. The Health Officer's assessment shall be made in accordance with the emergency involuntary hospitalization criteria set forth in O.R.C. 5122.10. In the event that a Health Officer takes a person into custody for the purpose of emergency examination or treatment, they must:

- 1) Provide a written statement to the hospital that specifies the circumstances under which said person was taken into custody and the basis for the Health Officer's conclusion that the person is mentally ill, and subject to hospitalization as defined in ORC 5122.01 (B) (1-5). A copy of the written statement must be provided to the respondent or his/her attorney upon the request of either;

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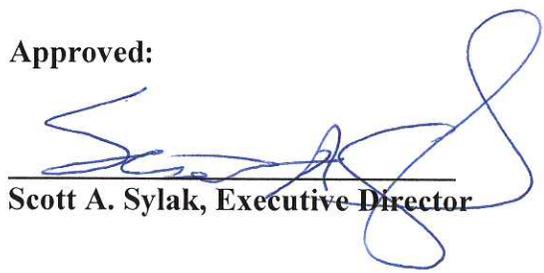
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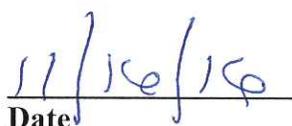
- 2) Make every reasonable and appropriate effort to take persons into custody in the least conspicuous manner possible;
- 3) Explain to the person being taken into custody that the custody-taking is not a criminal arrest, and that the person is being taken for examination by a mental health professional or psychiatrist to a specified mental health facility identified by name;
- 4) Take precautions to preserve and safeguard the personal property in the possession of or on the premises occupied by that individual;
- 5) Abide by the proper code of ethical conduct for licensed mental health professionals and protect the client's right to privacy and confidentiality; and
- 6) Maintain current knowledge of O.R.C. 5122.10 (emergency hospitalization) and O.R.C. 5122.29 (patient rights), and the MHR SB's Designation of Health Officers Policy.

**Health Officer Advisory Group**

- 1) The MHR SB Executive Director may convene an advisory group as needed. When convened, the group will be facilitated by the Director of Programs and Services (or designee); it will be open to all sponsoring agencies. In addition, the Executive Director may recruit hospital staff, consumers, law enforcement, or community stakeholders to serve in the advisory role.
- 2) The Health Officer Advisory Group should participate in the development and review of a Board approved training for Health Officers.
- 3) The Health Officer Advisory Group may advise on questionable applications, Health Officer qualifications, community policy regarding Health Officer activity, or procedural issues that present from time-to-time, or other related topics determined by the MHR SB's Executive Director or by the Group itself.

**Approved:**

  
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**Scott A. Sylak, Executive Director**

  
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**Date**