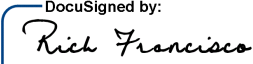




Policy/ Procedure Title: Communication by Mail, Telephone and Visits- Residential Facilities	Policy or Procedure #: 04-015	<u>Review Dates</u>	
Category: Recipient Rights Subject: To provide for communications by mail, telephone and visits.	Prepared by: The Office of Recipient Rights Approved by: DocuSigned by:  Rich Francisco, Executive Director		
	Effective Date: 04/22/1983	Last Revised Date: 09/24/2025	

I. POLICY

HealthWest staff and programs will ensure the rights of recipients who are entitled to unimpeded, private, uncensored communication by mail, telephone, or visits with persons of their choice, except in the circumstances when it has been documented in the recipient's individual plan of service (IPOS) and authorized by the recipient or his/her legal representative.

II. PURPOSE

To provide for communications by mail, telephone, and visits.

III. APPLICATION

All mental health residential facilities operated by HealthWest or contracted facilities where adherence to this policy is specified in the contract.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Controlled Condition:** at least two employees are involved in opening the mail.
- B. **Facility:** A residential setting for the care or treatment of individuals with a mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, or developmental disability that is either operated by or under contract with HealthWest.
- C. **House Rules:** Rules applying to all residents of a home that are established to assure the safety and comfort of recipients and the orderly functioning of the program or home
- D. **Incoming Mail:**
 - 1. Recipient's mail (including parcels and packages), **AND**
 - 2. Agency/facility mail (includes mail in the form of government check addressed to

agency/facility as representative payee for the recipient).

- E. **Legal Inquiry:** Discussion of any matter involving civil, criminal or administrative law with a private physician, mental health professional, court or attorney for the recipient.
- F. **Limitation:** a limit placed on recipient's right to receive and send mail, to use the telephone or to visit with persons of their choice as written and documented in the recipient's plan of service.
- G. **Private:** Secret, not intended to be made publicly known, confidential.
- H. **Reasonable Time:** Not seriously taxing the effective functioning of HealthWest.
- I. **Restriction:** An exclusion of a particular item as stated in the written policies of an agency/facility that applies to all recipients.
- J. **Uncensored:** Without rebuke, reproach, or disapproval; free from criticism; not judged or condemned.
- K. **Unimpeded:** Without hindrance, barricade, or other obstacle.

V. PROCEDURES FOR MAIL

- A. Facility staff shall not open a recipient's mail unless the resident or his/her legal representative has consented that an article of mail may be opened by a designated person or there is reasonable belief that the mail is in violation of a written limitation or restriction. Outgoing mail shall not be opened or destroyed without written consent of a resident or her/his legal representative. Instances of opening or destruction of mail by staff shall be recorded and placed in the resident's record.
- B. Residents shall be able to conveniently and confidentially receive mail and correspondence, and the facility shall make available to residents, upon request, non-letterhead stationery, envelopes, pens, pencils and postage in reasonable amounts.
- C. A facility shall provide a daily pick-up and deposit of mail.

VI. TELEPHONE PROCEDURE

- A. Telephones shall be reasonably accessible and funds for telephone usage will be made available in reasonable amounts.
- B. A resident shall be able to place and receive phone calls in a private area.
- C. A resident may call his/her legal representative at any time if the communication involves matters that may be the subject of legal inquiry unless the legal representative has requested limitations on such contacts.
- D. A resident may contact their physician promptly, but at reasonable times, immediately in case of emergency.
- E. Limitations on phone usage must be supported and authorized by documentation in the individual plan of services, including reasons to justify the limitation and a specific expiration date of the limitation.

VII. PROCEDURES FOR VISITS

- A. A resident will be able to have visitors he or she wishes to see.
- B. A resident's right to receive visitor's shall not be further limited except as authorized in the resident's individual plan of service (IPOS).
- C. Adequate space to visit with residents during visiting hours shall be provided.
- D. If a resident is able to secure the services of a mental health professional, he or she shall be allowed to see the professional at any reasonable time.

VIII. REFERENCES

M.C.L. 330.1 715, 330.1726(2), 330. 1752
Administrative Rule R 330. 7239(1)(c)

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