

Subject: Mental Health

From: "Reed, Frank"

Date: February 27, 2014 at 11:47:06 AM EST

To: 'Catherine Toll'

Subject: RE: RE:

The VPCH staffing plan was made to accomplish the following goals:

- To be fully operating as quickly as possible, reaching full capacity within 6 weeks of operation with over 50% new staff, in a new facility.
- To continue to maintain TJC (The Joint Commission) accreditation and CMS certification and mitigate negative events for staff or patients served.
- To maximize the environment and staffing to reduce Emergency Involuntary Procedures, (Seclusion, Restraint, and Emergency Involuntary Medication).

The VPCH staffing plan was developed by the current Chief Executive Officer, Director of Nursing, and Associate Director of Nursing at Green Mountain Psychiatric Care Center. Staffing ratios at Brattleboro Retreat, RRMC, New Hampshire State Hospital, and Worcester State Hospital were reviewed, as well as differences in patient population served, inpatient unit size, and non-direct care staff available to assist for emergency events. The proposed staffing was reviewed with Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of DMH. It was also reviewed by Paul Gorman, former CEO of New Hampshire Hospital and Commissioner of Mental Health in New Hampshire, and Ms. Kevin Huckshorn, current Commissioner of Mental Health in Delaware and a nationwide expert (recommended by Disability Rights Vermont) on reduction of restraint and seclusion. TJC accreditation and CMS certification standards were reviewed. There are no prescribed staffing ratios by either of these nationally recognized hospital accrediting or certifying bodies.

Additionally, the number of staff is influenced by the design of the building and provision for patient movement given the emphasis on safety in building design, open concept, access to green space, and options for individual patient space and "sanctuary". As examples, the way each individual bedroom and individual bathroom is situated, means two individuals are needed for whatever the frequency of individual safety checks are ordered in each of the hospital's three distinct parts. The open concept dining areas require a minimum of two staff to support kitchenette use and supervision of the 4 distinct area's when in use. Four help desk areas, each requiring a staff member's routine presence, are designed to respond to immediate patient needs or questions rather than default to attracting attention by staff who may be working at the nursing station. The design of the overall building does not provide continuous line of site throughout, so requires both staff movement and presence to assure safe oversight and management of

patients served. The new building will provide for multiple groups in multiple rooms off the patient care units. Patients moving to off-unit group treatment areas require varying levels of escort and supervision even though safety has been an emphasis of the facility. It is hoped and anticipated that the way the hospital has been designed, will promote creative use of space and provide a calming influence on people.

Over the first several months of operation, we will be evaluating our staffing ratios and our personnel mix needed to meet patient care, movement, recovery environment, and safety needs. At the present time, we believe we are projecting the right staffing level for this facility and the patients who will be served. Our experience in this facility and the staffing patterns utilized will be regularly evaluated; and we anticipate the need to share lessons learned and report back going forward.

Frank Reed, LICSW
Deputy Commissioner
Department of Mental Health
Agency of Human Services
26 Terrace Street
Montpelier, VT 05609-1101
802-828-3809