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 | INFORMATIONAL LETTER |
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TRANSMITTAL: 98 OCFS INF-5

TO: Local Commissioners of Social Services
 DIVISION: Development and Prevention Services

DATE: December 1, 1998

SUBJECT: Protective Services for Adults: Mental Health Evaluation Referral Instrument

SUGGESTED

DISTRIBUTION: Directors of Services
 Protective Services for Adults Supervisors
 Protective Services for Adults Caseworkers

CONTACT PERSON: Any questions concerning this release should be directed to your district's State representative of the Adult Services Program:

Kathleen Crowe (518) 486-3451 or USERID ROF017
 Carole Fox (518) 474-3167 or USERID AX5050
 Michael Monahan (518) 474-9590 or USERID AY3860

ATTACHMENTS: Mental Health Evaluation Referral Instrument

FILING REFERENCES

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
90 INF-16		457.6			

I. Purpose

The purpose of this release is to inform local districts of a mental health evaluation referral instrument which has been developed in order to assist Protective Services for Adults (PSA) caseworkers in obtaining mental health evaluations for their clients.

II. Background

Part 457 of Department regulations requires PSA staff to obtain mental health evaluations for clients when involuntary interventions are being considered. When involuntary legal interventions, such as Guardianship are being pursued, it is important to document the need for such interventions. This is accomplished by obtaining mental health evaluations which address key functional and cognitive areas of functioning. Local districts have, at times, experienced difficulty in obtaining the specific mental health information necessary in order to plan for and deliver necessary services for PSA clients.

The attached Mental Health Evaluation Referral Instrument has been developed in cooperation with local district PSA supervisors and caseworkers, as well as with clinical staff from state and local mental health agencies. In addition, drafts were sent to Directors of Services in each local district for comment. The recommendations made by local districts have been incorporated into this final product.

This referral instrument was designed to help provide necessary background and referral information on individual clients and to capture the necessary mental health information, such as the ability to make reasoned decisions, the capacity to understand consequences of decisions, and identification of functional and cognitive deficits which impact on the client's ability to function independently without suffering undo harm. Because limiting an individual's freedom is a serious matter, such specific information is crucial when petitioning a court for the authority to undertake involuntary interventions to assure a client's safety and well-being.

III. Implications

We encourage local districts to use the Referral Instrument to facilitate the mental health evaluation process. While its use is not mandatory, the structure of the form should improve the ability of local districts to obtain evaluations which provide the information necessary to serve the PSA client population. It should also be noted that the State Office of Mental Health has been requested to send the Referral Instrument to local mental health providers in order to ensure that they are familiar with it.

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A hard copy of the Referral Instrument is attached to this release. Districts are requested to reproduce it locally. If necessary, contact your PSA representative to obtain a copy.

Donald K. Smith
Deputy Commissioner
Development and Prevention Services