

# **THE MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY CENTER (MHEC)**

---

## **INFORMATIONAL OVERVIEW AND PROTOCOL TRAINING GUIDE**

The MHEC is located at 105 Mayo Place, Lufkin



# The MHEC is :

- A 24/7 Short-Term Crisis Facility
- Has Unlocked Voluntary Unit
- Has Locked, Secure Unit

Our goals are to free up law enforcement so they may return to patrol as quickly as possible, and avoid unnecessary visits to hospital Emergency Rooms!

# MHEC Residential Unit





# MHEC Patient Room



# Who can refer to the MHEC:

The following people within our 12-county service area:

- Law Enforcement
- Hospitals
- Judges
- Other Burke Center Programs
- (Not the general public)

# Limitations of the MHEC:

- No seclusion room or restraints (state law)
- Persons must be fully ambulatory
- Persons must be able to provide for own self-care (bathing, toileting, etc.) without assistance
- No face-to-face doctor services which limits the type of medical problems that can be safely treated

**No Doctors on the MHEC Campus** - All consultations with doctors are done via teleconferencing with physicians located in Houston





# Who the MHEC Serves:

- Persons 18 years and older
- Persons who are not currently violent or have been violent within the last 24 hours and out of restraints for 24 Hrs
- Persons who have a mental illness and are experiencing a mental health crisis

# Clients NOT Appropriate for the MHEC:

- Persons whose primary problem is substance related, we do not have detox. Case by Case basis.
- Persons with Alzheimer's or Dementia
- Persons with suspected or confirmed delirium
- Persons who are determined during the phone triage to have a high probability of serious medical problems
- Persons that are currently violent or in restraints.

# **Protocol for Mental Health Emergencies**

# **Protocol**

# **for**

# **Law Enforcement**

**Call** the MHEC staff **before** transporting client to a hospital or the MHEC!

When face-to-face with someone, call the MHEC, and a nurse will assist to determine if medical clearance is needed or if the client is appropriate for immediate transport to the MHEC.



# Triage with the MHEC

After triaging on the phone with the MHEC, one of the following will happen:

- 1. You will bring client directly to the MHEC  
or
- 2. You will take the client to your local Emergency Department for a medical Clearance  
or
- 3. You will arrange for a Burke Center assessment of the client at your agency's facility

# Assessments via Teleconferencing

**Law Enforcement:** If during the course of the phone triage with the MHEC, it is determined that the person in crisis does not need medical clearance, but a mental health assessment is desired, you may take the client back to your facility to have the assessment done via teleconferencing.

Your agency should have a computer(s) with the Clearsea teleconferencing software available 24/7. Please make sure you know where it is located, and how to use it.



# If Accepted to the MHEC:

Upon arrival at the MHEC, the nurse will begin triaging with the client within 15 minutes.

The officer must remain with the client until he/she is accepted for admission to the MHEC.

# Medical Clearance Request:

In the case of a request for a medical clearance, the reason for the request will be explained to the officer by the MHEC staff.

# If Denied Admission to the MHEC:

If the client is not accepted by the MHEC, the officer who brought the client will be responsible for the disposition of the client (see link to Texas Mental Health Code - Sec. 573.021)



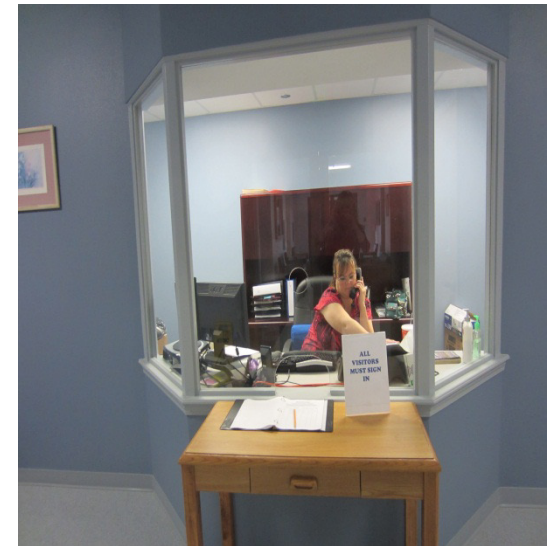
# Front Door of the MHEC



**Press Call Button** ( If no one responds, call the MHEC on your cell phone: 866-729-7731)



The entry hall and admissions area are small, narrow spaces, so we may have to stagger admissions if several are expected at the same time.





# Law to Law Hand-offs:

- At this time, MHEC provides Courtesy transportation as a last resort for local law enforcement.
- Clients who have been accepted by a psychiatric hospital may be brought to the MHEC, then taken to the psychiatric hospital by a Courtesy Transporter if one has been located. Call MHEC staff as soon as possible to discuss Courtesy transport arrangements.
- Law Enforcement will need to have a plan B for transportation.
- When there is an approved contract transport, the original officer must stay with the client at the MHEC until the transport officer arrives and assumes responsibility for the client.
- It is unclear how long funding for Courtesy Transportation will continue due to budget constraints and the grant ending.

# Protocol For Hospitals



- If a medical clearance has been requested by MHEC to law enforcement following a phone triage, MHEC staff will call the hospital with a report explaining the reason for the request for medical clearance.
- When a client presents to your ED, do the following:  
As soon as ED staff determine that there is a mental health emergency, contact the MHEC to either make a referral to MHEC or to request a Burke Center assessment.

The assessment may be done by an evaluator coming to your facility, or by teleconferencing if your hospital has the Clearsea software available.

# Assessments via Teleconferencing

- **Hospitals**: If a mental health assessment is requested for a person already at your hospital, it will often be much more expedient to do the assessment via teleconferencing.
- A computer(s) in your emergency department should have the Clearsea Teleconferencing software available 24/7.
- Contact the MHEC to request the assessment at **866-729-7731**
- Yellow laminated instructions for using the Mirial Clearsea software should be posted by the computer. It is quick and easy!



- When ED staff believe that medical clearance has been completed, call MHEC staff to refer the client for admission.
- If MHEC staff determine the client may be appropriate for admission, ED staff will be requested to fax the medical records.
- Please see the link to the MHEC Medical Exclusionary Form. Note that the documents that should to be faxed to the MHEC include: **1.) Physicians notes; 2.) H&P; 3.) Any Labs or X-rays; 4.) FACE sheet; 5.) Vital Signs records; 6.) the Completed Exclusionary Form signed by the physician.**
- Please call MHEC staff to confirm that your fax was received. At that time, MHEC will give you a general estimate of when to expect a decision for admission.

MHEC will contact you once acceptance or denial has been determined. If accepted, MHEC staff may ask for an Estimated Time of Arrival, and the method of transport to the MHEC.

If denied admission to the MHEC:

- If the client has insurance – the hospital will find placement at this point (see link of listing of Psychiatric Hospitals). If you have difficulty locating a private facility, contact the MHEC for possible assistance.
- If the client does not have insurance – MHEC will initiate the process for finding placement in an indigent bed. Once a bed has been found, you will be notified along with instructions and information for the disposition of the patient.

# **MHEC Phone Number:**

**936-674-3500 Or Toll free 866-729-7731**

Please put this number in your phone. This number is **only** for Law Enforcement and Hospitals.

The Public should call the Mental Health Crisis Helpline at 800-392-8343 to get directions on what to do in the case of a mental health emergency.

If you have questions about protocol or procedures, contact the MHEC Crisis Communications Director, Larry Pits or Contact Melissa Simmons, Crisis Director, at (936) 674-3500.



# **For Judges and Magistrates**

Please see links to resources and tools for you to use at your discretion. These include:

1. Texas Mental Health Code
2. Mental Health Warrant Application Form
3. Mental Health Warrant Information Sheet
4. Mental Health Warrant Form

If you have questions about protocol or procedures, contact the MHEC Crisis Coordinator, Tom Carrington, at 936-674-3500 or (toll free) 866-729-7731.