

PROTOCOL FOR INVOLUNTARY HOSPITALISATION OF PATIENTS WITH SEVERE MENTAL DISORDERS (SMDs)

Objectives: To coordinate the different administrative levels of authority involved in the involuntary hospitalisation of persons with severe mental disorders so as to reduce the intervention times by heightening effectiveness and preventing potentially harmful situations for the patients (lack of assistance, use of inappropriate coercive mechanisms, excessive police intervention, excessive red tape being involved in the assistance).

Target population: Any psychiatric or non-psychiatric patient requiring involuntary confinement in a hospital or residence.

Scope: Emergency Medical Care Services, Mental Health Units, Psychiatric Hospitalisation Units, family members of patients with SMDs, Police Forces, Courts and District Attorneys' Offices.

Intervention: Protocol unifying criteria for taking action and detailing the procedure to be followed in the cases of transferring patients with severe mental disorders who require involuntary hospitalisation, providing a practical solution to problems such as the use of physical restraint, if fitting, or entering homes.

This good practice also sets the bounds of other interventions such as actions taken by the Social Services network, the External Prison Social Services (in the case of security measures mandated in the criminal process), inspections or others which may arise.

A system of regular meetings is established, with the drafting of proposals to allow the involvement of user and family associations through the creation of a Coordinating Commission.

Evaluation: Special mention must be made of the considerable reduction in the amount of time necessary for proceeding to confinement in comparison to all other areas of the Community in which this protocol was not implemented, as well as the satisfaction of the users and family members.

Institution and center responsible for the intervention or program: The Ombudsman ("Síndic de Greuges") of the Autonomous Community of Valencia.

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