

Department of Mental Health  
**TRANSMITTAL LETTER**

SUBJECT

**Development of DMH Policy and Procedures**

POLICY NUMBER	DATE	TN#
<b>DMH Policy 671.1</b>	May 9, 2002	07

**Purpose.** To provide direction for the development of DMH policies and to describe the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Directives Issuance System.

**Applicability.** Applies to policies developed by the Mental Health Authority (MHA). Policies developed by mental health providers are addressed in Sections 5 and 14.

**Policy Clearance.** Reviewed by affected responsible staff and cleared through appropriate MHA offices and DMH leadership committee(s).

**Implementation Plans.** A plan of action to implement or adhere to a policy must be developed by designated responsible staff. If materials and/or training are required to implement the policy, these requirements must be part of the action plan. Specific staff should be designated to carry out the implementation and program managers are responsible to follow through to ensure compliance. Action plans and completion dates should be sent to the appropriate authority. Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs) must also ensure that contractors are informed of this policy if it is applicable or pertinent to their scope of work.

**Policy Dissemination and Filing Instructions.** Managers/supervisors of the DMH must ensure that staff are informed of this policy. Each staff person who maintains policy manuals must promptly file this policy in Volume I of the blue DMH Policy and Procedures Manual.

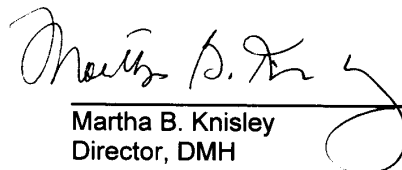
**ACTION**

**REMOVE AND DESTROY**


CMHS Policy 50000.671.1,  
dated March 3, 1993 from the CMHS  
Policy and Procedures Manual

**INSERT**

**DMH Policy 671.1**

  
Martha B. Knisley  
Director, DMH

**Government of the District of Columbia**

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH	<b>Policy No.</b> 671.1	<b>Date</b> May 9, 2002	<b>Page 1</b>
	Supersedes CMHS Policy 50000.671.1, dated March 3, 1993		
<b>Subject: Development of DMH Policy and Procedures</b>			

1. **Purpose.** To provide direction for the development of DMH policies and to describe the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Directives Issuance System.

2. **Applicability.** Applies to policies developed for the DMH by the Mental Health Authority (MHA). Policies developed by mental health providers are addressed in Section 5 and 14 below.

3. **Authority.** Mental Health Service Delivery Reform Act of 2001.

4. **Definitions/Abbreviations.**

4a. **Directives Issuance System** – An organized system of official written instructions containing requirements and actions that govern the operation of the Department. The system includes policy and procedures, amendments, notices, manuals on specific topics, and pen and ink changes when required. The terms policies and directives are used interchangeably.

4b. **Originating Office** – The office or individual that either proposes or is requested by the Director to develop, revise or rescind a DMH policy. The originator is the most involved or affected by the content of the policy.

4c. **DMH rule** – A rule is a statement that prescribes law, policy, procedure or practice requirements of the Department. Rules not only apply to DMH staff, but they also affect/apply to the general public or parts thereof or employees of the District government outside of the DMH.

4d. **DMH** – The Department of Mental Health, the successor in interest to the District of Columbia Commission on Mental Health Services

4e. **SEH** – Saint Elizabeths Hospital

4f. **MHA** – Mental Health Authority of the DMH

4g. **Mental health (MH) providers** – Any individual or entity, public or private, that is licensed or certified by the District to carry out the provision of mental health services or mental health supports, or that has entered into an agreement with DMH to carry out the provision of mental health services or mental health supports.

5. **Policy.**

The DMH Manual will serve as the primary guidebook on policies and procedures for the DMH. All policies developed within the Department (including Community Services Agency and SEH) and by other mental health providers must be consistent with any guiding DMH policies on the topic.

**6. Components of the Directives Issuance System.**

- 6a. DMH Manual – contains Department-wide policies issued by the DMH Director that can be applicable to one or more specific organizational component(s) of the Department and to private MH providers.
- 6b. Policies and procedures are developed at several levels by the MHA:
- DMH-wide policies
  - Other subordinate levels, such as office, division, and programs may develop policies internal to their operations. These policies may be needed to carry out a DMH-wide policy, to address special requirements for that program, or to address who will perform a task, and how it should be accomplished in a step by step manner.

District-wide regulations, such as DPM will not be rewritten for the DMH Manual, but necessary interpretations or adaptations may be issued as part of the Manual.

**7. Responsibilities.****7a. Policy Support Division (PSD), Office of Accountability.**

(1) **Monitor, control, and coordinate** the policy development process; including the development of specific DMH rules in coordination with the DMH Office of General Counsel (OGC) to ensure technical sufficiency prior to publication of the rules.

(2) **Maintain** necessary collaboration with provider level programs on policy issues as needed.

**7b. Program Managers and Department Staff.**

**Recommend** to their respective MHA office heads, new or revised policies and procedures relating to their area of operation or other programs.

**7c. Mental Health Authority Office Heads.**

MHA office heads are considered to be the originators of proposed or revised directive issuances, although the process of drafting same may begin at any level.

**8. Procedures for Processing Policies and Procedures.****8a. Originating Office**

(1) **Develop and circulate** drafts among affected program managers and those with collateral responsibilities.

(2) **Consult** with the PSD concerning the need for public notification (rulemaking) during the policy development phase. Some proposed policies developed by MHA, will require public notification through publication in the D.C. Register prior to implementation. This determination will be made early in the policy development phase.

(3) **Finalize** drafts and **obtain** clearance from the MHA office head.

(4) **Submit** cleared proposed issuances to the PSD for review, analysis, and coordination. Attach a justification form which provides the purpose and background information on the issuance. The form is available from PSD.

8b. Policy Support Division.

(1) **Notify** the originating office in writing of receipt of the proposed issuance and keep them informed of the status as needed.

(2) **Review** all proposed issuances for content, consistency, appropriateness, and compliance.

(3) **Coordinate** review of proposed issuances with affected MHA level offices, such as the Office of General Counsel unless documentation indicates prior concurrence was obtained.

(4) **Obtain** determinations from the OGC as to applicable requirements for publication in the D.C. Register; work with originating office in development of draft rules, when applicable, prior to submission to OGC.

(5) **Take action to resolve** any substantive issues and problems identified during review and incorporate agreed upon changes.

(6) **Obtain** clearances from designated MHA leadership committee(s) and forward to the DMH Director for consideration and signature.

(7) **Initiate** development, **revision, and rescission** of Department-wide directive issuances upon request of the DMH Director or as otherwise required.

9. Policy Formats.

Prepare proposed DMH issuances in accordance with the requirements for format and style set forth in Exhibit 1.

Formats of policies issued at the office, division, or program level are determined by the MHA office director, but the DMH format may be used as a guide.

10. Approving Authorities for Policies.

10a. Office of the Director

(1) The DMH Director has sole authority to provide final approval of proposed policies that are newly developed, revised, or rescinded. The Director may also disapprove or defer action on a proposed issuance pending further analysis of the proposal by PSD or other appropriate office. (See Section 11b below on notices.)

The Director, at his/her discretion may designate deputy directors to sign certain policies based on their purview of responsibility and subject matter expertise. When telephone numbers and address changes need to be made within a policy, the change may be made via memorandum signed by the Deputy Director, Office of Accountability.

(2) Approval will be evidenced by the Director's/designee's signature on the transmittal letter and the policy and on any amendments thereto.

(3) Following review and action on the proposed issuance, the document will be returned to the PSD for final processing and disposition.

10b. MHA Office Heads.

Any policy developed by a MHA office (e.g., Delivery Systems), which applies to DMH programs/staff external to that office are considered to be DMH-wide and shall be approved by the DMH Director.

MHA office heads (Accountability, etc.) shall sign office and division level policies, and division directors shall sign program level policies. All policies shall be dated. Policy Support Division does not review internal office, division, or program level policies, but will provide guidance as needed.

10c. PSD Actions Following Approval or Disapproval.

(1) **Notify** the originating office and return the document to the component if the proposed issuance is disapproved by the DMH Director.

(2) If approved, **arrange** for duplication through SEH Duplicating Unit in accordance with established distribution lists.

See the flow chart of the Department's policy development process in Exhibit 2.

11. Procedures for Processing an Amendment or Notice.

11a. Amendments.

- are used to make occasional brief, critical changes to **existing** policy without reissuance of the entire document;
- **are processed and approved** in the same manner as a policy, but usually require limited review by only those affected by the change and specialty offices (legal) as deemed appropriate.

See Section 11c below on formats.

11b. Notices.

- announce **new** policy and procedures that must be implemented within a short time frame which cannot be met through the normal issuance process;
- serve as a temporary measure until they can be replaced with a more detailed and definitive policy and procedure directive which has been thoroughly reviewed and finalized;
- are usually needed to comply with new legislation, court orders, or to meet urgent situations.

**Approval of DMH Notices:** Following clearance by the MHA office head as applicable, the notice will be forwarded to the PSD. Notices **will be approved** and signed by the DMH Director and PSD shall arrange for duplication.

11c. Formats.

See Exhibit 1, page 2 for DMH notice and amendment formats; All notices must be subsequently converted to a policy and procedure which will be subject to standard review procedures unless cancelled.

11d. Policy Support Division.

- (1) **Complete** review of the notice within ten (10) business days of receipt.
- (2) **Process** DMH notices for issuance, if the proposed notices are determined to meet the preliminary review criteria.
- (3) **Notify** the originating office in writing specifying changes in the notice that are necessary to achieve compliance if it is determined that the proposed issuance is inconsistent with either law, regulation and/or DMH policy.

11e. Replacing the Notice with a Policy and Procedure.(1) Originating Office

- (a) **Replace** notices with a regular policy and procedure within 180 days of distribution unless there is written justification for extension provided to PSD.
- (b) **Submit** the replacement policy and procedure to the PSD thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the notice which it is designed to replace.

(2) Policy Support Division

- (a) **Provide** technical assistance as needed to the originating office in converting the notice to a permanent issuance.
- (b) **Conduct** review of the proposed issuance replacement in accordance with the provisions of Section 8 above.
- (c) **Submit** the proposed issuance to the DMH Director for decision/approval ten (10) business days prior to the expiration of the notice to be replaced.

12. **Specialized Manuals.** Specialized manuals applicable DMH-wide (e.g. safety) that contain policies or material of a policy nature will be approved and signed by the Director, DMH, in addition to designated responsible officials. Other specialized manuals should be approved and signed by the MHA office head or designee, as appropriate. Managers will ensure that these manuals do not conflict with DMH policy or rules and shall provide copies of these manuals to PSD.

13. **Implementation Timeframes.** Managers and supervisors are responsible for promptly and appropriately implementing DMH policies. Policies issued by the DMH are effective upon date of the Director's signature. Implementation of all DMH policies shall begin as soon as possible. Full implementation shall be completed within sixty (60) days after the date of the policy or sooner if required by the individual policy.

**14. Specific Guidance.**

All mental health providers shall:

- **Ensure** that their policies are consistent with any guiding DMH policies, DMH rules, and other applicable federal or District laws and regulations; and
- **Comply** with any timeframes for implementation prescribed by DMH policies and rules.

Community Services Agency and SEH shall:

- **Develop** an internal directive on developing policies and procedures;
- **Ensure** that their policies are also distributed in accordance with established MHA distribution lists;
- **Obtain** determinations from the DMH General Counsel as to whether proposed policies will require public notification through publication in the D.C. Register, as necessary; and
- **Obtain** necessary legal review of their policies by DMH General Counsel

Private MH providers shall:

- **Supply** copies of their policies upon DMH request and in accordance with contract provisions.

**15. Departmental Policy Reviews.** Every two year anniversary date of each policy issuance or sooner if deemed appropriate, the Policy Support Division will coordinate a review of Department policies for relevancy currency, and appropriate disposition. The PSD involves all affected managers in this review. Actions taken on each issuance is forwarded to the Director.

**16. Related References. None**

Approved by:

Martha B. Knisley  
Director, DMH

Martha B. Knisley  
(Signature)

05/09/02  
(Date)

## **FORMATS FOR POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

All DMH-wide policies must contain the information required in paragraphs 1-4 below.

**1. Primary Sections and order of presentation:**

- **Purpose\***
  - **Applicability\***
  - **Authority\***
  - **Background**
  - **Definitions**
  - **Policy**
  - **Responsibilities**
  - **Procedures\*** *(may be exceptions)*
  - **Related References\***
  - **Other general sections as needed**
- \*REQUIRED**

**2. Each page will identify the policy number and date**

**3. Approved Date and Signature block on the last page**

**4. The same DMH Transmittal Letter will be used for all DMH policies and notices and will be signed by the Director or designee.**

**5. Transmittal Letter, Title Page, and Headers**

The Transmittal Letter and Title page of the policy will be formatted in the style of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> page of this policy. PSD will forward this style to users upon request via E-mail or disk. Example of headers for second and succeeding pages is as follows:

**DMH POLICY 671.1**

Arial 14 pt

**PAGE 2**

Arial 12 pt.

**DATED:**

Arial 12 pt.

**Software and font size**

- **Department-wide policies are prepared in Microsoft Word**
- **Arial 11 point font using standard 1 inch margins**
- **An outline numbering system will be used**
- **Exhibits will also reflect policy and exhibit number and date in the upper right corner of each page**



**DMH POLICY 671.1**

Exhibit 1-9

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**FORMATS FOR DMH NOTICES AND AMENDMENTS**

**NOTICE Format Example**

<b>DMH NOTICE 100</b> 18pt Arial	Date
Subject:	

(Microsoft Word, 11 pt. Arial used for the rest of the document, 1 inch margins)

1. Purpose.
  2. Applicability
  3. Other general sections as needed
  4. Effective Date
  5. Cancellation
- Four blank lines

\_\_\_\_\_  
name and title of DMH Director

**Amendment Format Example**

<b>DMH AMENDMENT 100.1</b> 18pt Arial	Date
Subject:	

(Microsoft Word, 11 pt. Arial used for the rest of the document, 1 inch margins)

1. Purpose.
  2. Applicability
  3. Other general sections as needed
  4. Effective Date
  5. Cancellation
- Four blank lines

\_\_\_\_\_  
name and title of DMH Director

### STEPS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT THE DMH Authority Level

