



Date: July 26, 2010

To: Chief Nursing Officers/Executives
Emergency Department Nurse Managers

cc: Behavioral Health Administrators/Directors
Emergency Department Physician Directors

From: Berna Bell, Director, Health Policy, Ohio Hospital Association
Laura Tiberi, Executive Director, Ohio ACEP

Re: **Psychiatric Holds in Emergency Departments**

As you know, hospital emergency departments continue to face a critical breaking point, holding patients in need of behavioral health services for hours and often days at a time. Emergency physicians in the state also report significant problems with psychiatric patients being boarded in emergency departments while waiting to see a psychiatrist or be admitted to a hospital psychiatric unit.

In order to address the problem of psychiatric holds in the emergency departments and in order to adequately address the state's relatively low number of psychiatric care beds and shortage of mental health and addiction treatment providers, we first need to have quantifiable data that demonstrate the extent of the problem with specific data indicators.

To demonstrate to state officials the dire situation facing our emergency departments today we are asking each of you to work with your staff to participate in a reporting study, focusing on patients waiting in excess of 12 hours.

The attached ***FastFax ~ 12-Hour Wait Reporting for Psychiatric Patients*** will help us gather information over a distinct period of time. For each 12-hour interval that a patient is held in your emergency department, we are asking that this *Fast Fax* be completed and faxed back to OHA at (614) 358-2703. The *FastFax* should be returned in real time – anytime, 24/7.

Submitting your hospital's name is important so that we can trend regional issues that providers are facing. Specific patient identifiers should not be included. If you face challenging issues regularly that are not reflected on this form, please feel free to modify it for ease of use in your facility. We only ask that you do not eliminate any of the points contained originally.

The aggregate data collected from the survey will be shared with officials in the Ohio Department of Mental Health, the Ohio Department of Insurance, members of the Coalition for Healthy Communities (32 statewide organizations working together to address issues related to behavioral health, including appropriate funding, insurance coverage/denials, etc.) and Ohio legislators so that we can address the ongoing crisis of delays for placement of patients seeking behavioral health services.

If you have any questions, please contact Berna at (614) 221-7614 or at bbell@oha.org or Laura at (614) 792-6506 or ltiberi@ohacep.org.