

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital



Guidebook

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SECTION ONE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Welcome to the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital

Our mission is to provide excellent care and treatment in a recovery-oriented, safe, respectful environment. We want to work together with you to develop and carry out the best plan to meet your health and safety needs while you are hospitalized.

Our goal is to help you regain healthfulness and stability so you can return successfully to your community as soon as possible.

This guidebook is written to:

- Help guide you through your hospital stay and answer any questions you may have about our program.
- Help you become familiar with how the care areas of VPCH function.
- Inform you about important policies.
- Let you know what you can expect from your care team and the hospital.
- Share with you what is expected of you, your family, and other visitors.

We encourage you to participate in our program and collaborate actively as a member of your care team as you work to reach your health and wellness goals.

Whether you are reading this guidebook for yourself or on behalf of a friend or family member who is hospitalized, we invite you to bring your questions or concerns to any member of our team.



Your Rights

Because your hospitalization is involuntarily, it is important for you to be aware of your rights. A copy of the *Notice of Patient Rights* is presented to you at the time of admission. If you would like another copy, please ask a member of the VPCH team.

The Notice of Patient Rights is also posted on each hospital unit.

If you believe your rights are not being honored, you can call Disability Rights Vermont at 1-800-834-7890.

Admission

When you first arrive at the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH), you meet with admissions personnel, a psychiatrist, and nursing personnel. The purpose of this meeting is to gather important information so that your care team can begin to get to know you, and so you can begin to know them. Plans to meet your health, safety, and ultimately your discharge needs begin immediately at this initial meeting.

Following this initial meeting, your personal belongings will be searched and inventoried. This is done to maintain hospital safety and the security of your items. A list will be made of everything you have with you, and a copy will be provided to you.

Certain items that are not considered safe to have in the secure, treatment areas of the hospital will be stored in a secure area. These items may be accessible at the discretion of your treatment team. If you would like access to such an item, please ask any member of the VPCH team.

Stored items that do not present a high risk of physical danger will be returned to you when you leave the hospital. Items that are illegal, broken, expired, or beyond repair as well as food items may not be returned to you and/or discarded.

If you believe needed items did not arrive with you, or that items have been lost, please inform the members of your team. VPCH personnel will make every effort to locate items that were lost or misplaced.

During the admission process, your picture will be taken. Your picture is kept in a private location where it is accessible to those working with you. This picture is used as a safeguard so that you are correctly identified by the personnel providing care. Your picture will not be shared with anyone outside of the hospital.

Nursing personnel are available to you 24/7. When you arrive to the care unit, Nursing personnel will orient you to the new surroundings, assist with your immediate needs, and list and label your personal belongings.

Within 24 hours of admissions, you will be offered a routine physical examination, which may include tests of blood and urine. This examination helps the physician diagnose any physical, non-psychiatric medical problems that may warrant treatment.

Any prescription medication which you bring to the hospital will be listed as your personal property. The medications will be inventoried and stored in our on-site pharmacy. If prescribed at the time of discharge, they will be returned to you.

While you are in the hospital, the VPCH pharmacy will supply your prescribed medications.

Daily Schedule

The times of events, programs, meetings, meals, breaks, and bedtime are posted on each unit.

Food and Beverages

Three meals are provided daily. Refer to the schedule posted on each unit for specific times. Meals are served in the on-unit dining area. A selective menu is provided each day. You are given an opportunity to choose from the menu offered. We provide a 4-week cycle menu. The menu is adjusted for seasonal products with an emphasis on healthy and nutritious foods.

Therapeutic diets such as: low fat, low cholesterol; consistent carbohydrate; or sodium restricted will be provided when medically appropriate and ordered by a physician. Vegetarian meal options are also available. Please inform staff of any religious, cultural or ethnic preferences as it relates to your dietary needs.

Snacks are provided in the early morning, afternoon, and evening. Decaf tea, juice, milk, fruit and water are available at any time. If you require snack time to be extended or are in need of a snack outside of the scheduled time, please bring your needs to the attention of the Charge Nurse on your unit.

We understand you may have individual food preferences, and we will work to accommodate your preferences whenever possible.

If you have special food requests or would like to report problems with meals, please let a VPCH team member know. A member of the VPCH nursing staff will communicate your concerns to the VPCH dietician. The VPCH dietician can meet with you to answer your questions and consider your requests regarding food service. The dietician is available to meet with you regarding food and nutrition concerns as it relates to daily menu planning or general health concerns.



For food safety and regulatory reasons, perishable food items (such as fresh fruits, refrigerated items, etc.) are not generally allowed in private unit areas. If you have non-perishable items, please speak with a member of your team about guidelines for keeping food. Because refrigerator and storage space are limited on the units, food is not generally stored/saved. Exceptions may be made by a Charge Nurse for special circumstances depending on space availability.

Telephones

Telephones are available 24/7 on each unit. Calls can be made at no cost. To help maintain an environment conducive to rest and recovery, calls are encouraged to occur between the hours of 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM. We also encourage you to make calls at times when groups are not occurring whenever possible.

Nurses and Mental Health Specialists can assist you with making calls if needed. We will make every effort to help you with phone calls when you request assistance. There may be exceptions where we are not able to assist you immediately but will do so as soon as possible.



You may refuse to receive any phone call.

Phone use may be limited or supervised if your calls have been abusive, obscene, threatening, legally prohibited, or in violation of legal orders of protection/restraint.

While you are hospitalized, it is not necessary to make calls to 911 or other community-based emergency services. In the event of an emergency, you will receive instruction from VPCH personnel about how to be safe.

If your phone access has been limited or restricted, you will still be allowed to contact your attorney (Legal Aid or other attorney), Disability Rights Vermont, the patient representative and Adult Protective Services at any time. You have a right to privacy when making phone calls to these individuals. You may also be allowed to call family members/friends, and others who are willing to receive your calls.

Important Phone Numbers:

Unit A Phone	1-802-828-2777
Unit B Phone	1-802-828-2776
Unit C Phone	1-802-828-2767
Unit D Phone	1-802-828-2766
VPCH Switchboard	1-802-828-3300
VPCH Patient Representative	Office: 1-802-479-8716 Cell: 1-802-345-0644
Vermont Legal Aid	1-800-889-2047
Disability Rights Vermont	1-800-834-7890 / 1-802-229-1355
Adult Protective Services	1-800-564-1612 / 1-802-241-0344
Vermont Psychiatric Survivors	1-802-775-6834
National Alliance on Mental Illness: Vermont	1-800-639-6480

Mail

You may give your outgoing mail to VPCH personnel who will see that it is mailed.

If you are without funds, the hospital will provide postage for up to seven letters per week.

VPCH personnel will open all incoming mail in your presence, to screen for items that could be dangerous to you or others, and to identify items of value that should be stored securely while you are in the hospital. Your mail will not be read without your permission.



Television

There are two televisions on each unit. One is in the common living area, and the other is in the Quiet/ Visitor's Room. Each television is equipped with a DVD player. Guidelines for use of the TV, including how to reserve the TV for special programs, are posted on each unit.

Televisions may be turned off during group times.

If television content appears to be disruptive to you or the unit milieu, Nursing personnel may change the channel or turn off the television.

Sleep

To take full advantage of VPCH programming, we ask that you be out of bed and dressed for breakfast by 8:00 AM.



Sleep disturbances frequently accompany psychiatric illness. Most people sleep better in a quiet environment and sleeping well helps people feel better. Please let members of your treatment team know when you are having difficulty sleeping.

If you are unable to sleep, please be as quiet as possible to allow others to sleep. VPCH personnel may suggest activities to help you relax and rest.

Religion and Spirituality

If you wish to have contact with a clergy person, or have other concerns related to religion or spirituality, please inform a member of your treatment team, and we will attempt to meet your requests.

Personal Possessions

Throughout your hospitalization, all personal possessions will be inventoried and documented. You will be provided with a copy of the inventory of your belongings.

There is ample space in your room to store up to five sets of clothing. Additional clothing may be stored in a secure area of the hospital, but we encourage you to ask a family member or friend to keep your additional clothing for you while you are in the hospital.

You may keep personal photographs, artwork, books, and mail in your room. You may keep an amount of personal paperwork that will fit into a standard file box.

You may hang artworks such as drawings, paintings, collages, posters, and poetry on the visual display area of your room. Please do not hang anything that would block the ability to see into your room.

Shelves and a desk are provided. If you have a large quantity of belongings, you may be asked to keep some of it to storage.

Grooming products that have the potential to cause harm, such as razors and dental floss, will be kept in a locked area. Products will be provided to you in a safe manner when you wish to use them.

Some examples of items that are not kept in the care areas of the hospital are:

- medications, illegal drugs, alcohol, and toxic substances.
- matches, lighters, cigarettes, tobacco, and other smoking materials.
- hair products must always be reviewed by the charge nurse. Some are acceptable, some are not (e.g., high alcohol content, pumps, etc.), aerosol products, and razors.
- hair dryers, curling irons, and other electrical appliances.
- guns, knives, and other items that may be used as weapons.
- mirrors, bottles, and other items made out of glass.
- scissors, sewing kits, and other sharp objects.
- shoelaces, ties, string, straps, cords, belts, drawstrings, and similar items.
- plastic bags.
- keys.
- perishable food (such as fresh fruits or refrigerated items) when it is in a individual's room.
- jewelry that could be used to cause physical harm.
- some projects or crafts made in Recovery Services
- any other item that, within the discretion of staff, poses a potential risk of harm to you or others.

Specific restricted items may be permitted on a case-by-case basis by a doctor's order and used or dispensed only under a nurse's supervision. If you would like access to specific grooming products or other items listed above, please ask a member of your treatment team if an exception can be made.

Valuables and Money

We strongly encourage you to leave valuables at home or send them home with a friend or relative. If that is not possible, valuables and larger amounts of money may be stored in the hospital safe in the admissions area, to be reclaimed by you at the time of discharge.

To prevent loss, we encourage you to keep only a small amount of money in your possession while on the unit.

The hospital cannot assume responsibility for the loss of money, jewelry, or other personal property that you choose to keep on your person.

VPCH personnel are not allowed to accept money/gifts from you, to purchase items from you, or to lend money or sell items to you.

Personal Care and Care of the Living Area

We encourage you to keep your room in a clean and orderly condition. Personnel are available to assist you if you are unable to complete this task by yourself. Nursing staff will check your room for cleanliness each morning, or more often if necessary.

Members of our custodial team will clean rooms on a regular basis. Only when necessary for safety/hygienic/regulatory reasons, rooms may be cleaned without your permission.

We ask that you be up and dressed for breakfast. Please remain dressed whenever accessing or utilizing public areas of the hospital. We strongly recommend suitable footwear at all times to prevent injury and/or infection. We also ask that you please wear some type of clothing while you sleep.

VPCH personnel will encourage regularly showering, as well as routinely changing and laundering your clothes and bedding.



Personal hygiene products are available at the unit team stations.

There is a washer and dryer located on each unit and the times for use are posted. For health reasons, please do not wash your items with anyone else's items. Personnel will guide you through the laundry process and will offer assistance when needed.

We ask that you clean up after yourself in the common living areas: activity rooms, dining room, yard, etc.

Tobacco-Free Hospital

Medical evidence shows that smoking and other use of tobacco products is harmful to the health of smokers and nonsmokers. To provide a healthy environment for you and others, this hospital will offer counseling about the hazards of smoking and the use of other tobacco products, offer smoking/tobacco cessation programs to decrease or stop nicotine intake, provide nicotine replacement products when necessary, and implement a smoke- and tobacco-free environment.



Use of any tobacco product is prohibited on the VPCH grounds.

Cigarettes and other tobacco-related products are not allowed in care areas of the hospital. These will be kept in storage and returned to you at discharge.

Nicotine replacement materials will be prescribed as needed to address and reduce any discomfort that occurs as a result of smoking/tobacco cessation.

Groups and Activities

Recovery services provide therapeutic and leisure groups and other activities, on the unit and in the Recovery and Learning Center. Members of the nursing staff lead groups and activities on the units.

Group activity is an important part of hospital treatment. We strongly encourage you participate in the groups identified in your treatment plan.



The groups are designed to help you get to know others and groups provide opportunities to give and receive support. Groups also can help you discover and rediscover your strengths, and to identify focus areas to work on while you are in the hospital and after discharge. Groups offer new ways to think about and address problems.

The more you interact with others, the more you can gain from groups and from your entire hospital experience.

Community Meeting

You are invited to attend a weekly community meeting to discuss how things are going on the unit, to make requests, solve problems, suggest changes and hear updates from members of the hospital team. Ask a member of the unit staff when and where this meeting is scheduled to be held.

Visitors

Visitors are welcome at the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital.

VPCH personnel recognize that visits from family and friends are extremely important and will make every reasonable effort to ensure that visits can happen. We are sensitive to the issues that can make visiting a challenge, such as long drives and work and family obligations and will try to accommodate them.

Standard daily visiting hours are 4PM – 6:30PM. Additional visiting hours on Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays are 10AM – 12PM.

The Chief Executive Officer or Nursing Supervisor are authorized to make exceptions to standard visiting hours.

If visitors know they will be unable to visit during regular visiting hours, we encourage the visitor to call the unit in advance to pre-schedule the visit.

You may receive visits from anyone you wish to meet with.

You have the right to refuse to see any visitor. If you would like support with asking someone not to visit or asking a visitor to leave, please let a member of your team know so that we can help.

Visitors enter through the main entrance to the hospital. Before visiting, visitors shall sign into the hospital in the reception area. To begin the visiting process, hospital staff shall:

- Ask for visitors to show their photo identification unless the visitor is known to hospital staff.
- Provide visitors with a key to a locker if they are carrying items not allowed in the care areas. Visitors will also be provided a list of prohibited items.
- Provide each visitor with a name tag to be worn at all times while in the hospital and returned to staff when signing out after the visit is complete.
- Inspect the visitor with a metal detecting wand. Decisions to waive this requirement are made by hospital staff on a case-by-case basis.
- Examine all items being brought to care areas, before the items are distributed.
- Escort the visitor to an area designated for the visit.
- Accompany each visitor throughout the visit.

Several factors can affect the length of a visit. For example: availability of visiting space, staffing, and other care and safety needs on the unit. The Charge Nurse or designee is authorized to make decisions about the length of a visit.

A separate visitor's handbook is available to all visitors of VPCH.



Visitors

Visits by individuals under the age of 18 must be pre-approved by your treatment team. These usually occur in a designated secure area off the unit and are supervised by hospital staff. Any approved visitor under the age of 18 must always be accompanied and supervised by an adult visitor. VPCH staff will not be responsible for supervising visiting minors.

VPCH personnel are obligated to provide a quiet and supportive environment. Any visitor whose behavior is considered disruptive to the unit will be asked to leave. If a particular individual may have a negative impact on recovery, the treatment team may restrict visits by that person.

Disability Rights Vermont (DRVT) and the VPCH patient representative have a right to reasonable unaccompanied access within the hospital to all individuals hospitalized at VPCH. This includes the right to have private conversations with all individuals hospitalized at VPCH. All other visits are to occur in designated visiting areas accompanied by VPCH personnel.

Decisions about visits may be reconsidered at any time by you and other members of your treatment team.

SECTION TWO: RESPECT AND SAFETY

Respect

You have a right to be treated with respect by others. If someone treats you in a way that you do not like we encourage you to tell that person how you want to be treated.

If you want assistance in speaking directly with another person, VPCH can accompany you while you speak with the person. VPCH personnel are available to support you while you speak with others or act as a mediator if indicated.

If you do not wish to speak directly with the person, but need help in dealing with someone, any member of your treatment team can assist you, or help you make a plan to manage the situation.



Patient Representative

A patient representative is available to help you in the following ways:

- Speak with you about problems you are experiencing at VPCH.
- Provide information about your rights and the grievance process.
- Attend treatment plan meetings with you at your request.
- Speak with treatment team members with you at your request.
- Help you complete satisfaction surveys.

The VPCH patient representative's telephone numbers: office: 802-479-8716 / cell: 1-802-345-0644.

Video Monitoring for Unit Safety

Please be aware that video monitoring occurs in public areas of the hospital, including Recovery Services spaces, and outside spaces to increase safety. This monitoring is live feed, and the video monitoring is not recorded.

Observation

Because VPCH is highly committed to protecting your safety and the safety of others, observation of all individualized hospitalized at VPCH occurs on a regular and ongoing basis. At a minimum visual observation occurs at least once every 30 minutes, 24 hours a day.

Upon admission, you can expect to either be observed continuously or at least once every 15 minutes, until a doctor changes the frequency of your observation orders.

At any time during hospitalization, constant observation may be initiated for your safety. If you are under constant observation, personnel will stay close to you and to maintain visual contact.

Different types of constant observation may be ordered by your doctor, depending upon the level of concern for your safety or the safety of others.

In the most intensive form of constant observation, personnel must maintain visual contact with you at all times. Although this cannot be guaranteed, attempts will be made to assign someone of the same gender to do constant observation while dressing, showering, and using the toilet.

If you have questions or concerns about level of observation, please ask a member of your treatment team. Levels of observation are assessed and decided daily by treatment teams.

Searches

For safety reasons, personnel will periodically conduct searches for items that are not allowed on the unit. All rooms are checked for safety on a regular basis.

During a room search, you may be present in the doorway outside the room but may not enter the room. While observing a search from the doorway, you will be accompanied until the search has been completed.

Items deemed unsafe will be removed and stored securely. If any items are removed during a search, you will be informed of what is being removed and the reason why. Perishable food items such as fresh fruits or refrigerated items will be removed for disposal.

Friendships and Intimacy

Friendships between peers are often an important, positive and supportive aspect of a stay on any unit. Privacy is also very important, and the privacy of each individual will be protected whenever possible.

You may visit with peers only in public areas. Visits do not occur in bedrooms.

Within the hospital, any sexual contact between any individuals is strictly prohibited.

Sexual contact will be considered abuse and will be reported to the state Adult Protective Services.

Getting Through Difficult Times Successfully

Members of the treatment team are committed to helping you get through difficult situations and learn from them. Here are some suggestions for dealing with upsetting situations:

- Talk with a staff member, friend, or family member.
- Get involved in any activity that helps you feel calmer and less distressed. Some activities that people find relaxing include listening to music, walking in the hall, going outside, being alone in your room or another room on the unit, getting involved in a group activity, writing, taking a shower, doing crafts, watching TV or reading.
- Practice mindfulness. Breathing and other sensory exercises, meditation and yoga can bring people back to a simpler sense of the present, less overwhelmed or preoccupied with overly intense thoughts and emotions.
- When you do not find these activities helpful and if you have medication ordered to reduce anxiety, ask your nurse if it is available at that time. If you do not have medication ordered to reduce anxiety, ask your doctor if s/he will prescribe one.

Preventing Harm in Relationships

All personnel of the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital are committed to protecting your physical and emotional safety. Personnel are educated and trained to assist you during times that may be challenging during your stay. We are committed to maintaining an environment at VPCH that is therapeutic for everyone. Threatening behaviors are strongly discouraged and will be managed on an individual basis.

Examples of unacceptable behavior

- Entering the physical space of another person without being invited.
- Uninvited physical touch.
- Hitting, spitting, kicking, or throwing an object at another person.
- Gesturing toward another person in an aggressive way (for example, raising hand as if to hit or pointing a finger at someone).
- Threats to harm another person in any way.
- Staring at another person.
- Name-calling, ridicule, making embarrassing, cruel, or hateful comments. The use of profanity is discouraged.
- Unwanted sexually oriented comments, requests, suggestions, or threats.
- Unwanted sexually suggestive behavior of any kind (for example, staring at or pointing to a specific body part, not wearing enough clothing, or wearing clothing that is too revealing).
- Damaging or threatening to damage another person's property.
- Continuing any behavior toward another person after the person has asked you to stop.

If another behaves in a way that makes you feel threatened, nervous, or afraid, please tell any member of the inpatient treatment team. Members of your team will work with you to develop a plan to protect your safety.

Reviewing Your Medical Record While in the Hospital

If you wish to review your medical record while you are hospitalized, please ask your doctor.

If you review your record while you are hospitalized, you will be accompanied by nurse or other hospital personnel, to answer any questions and to protect the integrity of your record. The time and frequency of your reviews will be specified in a doctor's order.



You also have the right to request a copy of your medical record. If you have questions about your medical record, please ask your doctor or other a member of your treatment team for assistance.

Preventing Harm: Emergency Involuntary Procedures

We encourage you to tell members of your treatment team what has helped you deal with distress in the past. This provides your team with valuable information about how to help you in the future.

When there is an immediate danger that you may seriously harm yourself or someone else, it is the requirement of the treatment team to prevent or to minimize that danger. In almost every case, treatment team members can help you to reduce or eliminate danger through the use of non-physical interventions. When non-physical interventions have not been effective, or are unlikely to be effective, locked seclusion, restraints, and/or emergency involuntary medications may be used.

All VPCH personnel who implement involuntary emergency procedures requiring physical interventions have been trained and receive ongoing education and training in the safe and proper use of these interventions.

Working Out Problems with Personnel

If you are having a problem with any member of your treatment team, please discuss the situation with that person and try to clarify and resolve the problem. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, ask a member of your treatment team who you have a good relationship with to help you resolve the problem.

If you are unable to resolve a problem with a member of the staff, you are encouraged to submit a grievance to the VPCH Quality Department. Your grievance will be investigated, and you will receive a written response. Grievance forms are available on the unit. If you would like assistance in writing a grievance, you can ask any member of the unit staff for help.

Grievances – How to File a Grievance

Information about Grievances:

- How to file a grievance
- How to file an appeal of a response to your grievance
- How the grievance process works

Complaints and concerns about service or treatment that you receive while at VPCH may be brought to any personnel at any time. Personnel will attempt to resolve all complaints and concerns as soon as possible. When a complaint cannot be resolved, or the resolution is not satisfactory to you, you may file a grievance with the hospital. You may also ask a friend, relative, advocate or other representative to file a grievance for you.

Grievances – How to File a Grievance

To file a grievance

To file a grievance, you must write out a statement of your complaint or concern. You should include as much information as possible and include what you would like the hospital to do about your complaint or concern. If you need help writing your grievance, you can ask someone for help. The people that can help you include: VPCH personnel, the VPCH patient representative (phone number: (1-802-479-8716)), your lawyer (Vermont Legal Aid or another attorney), someone from Disability Rights Vermont, a friend or a relative. You may also file a grievance after you have been discharged.

You may contact Disability Rights Vermont at:

Disability Rights Vermont
141 Main Street, Suite 7
Montpelier VT, 05602
1-800-834-7890 or 1-802-229-1355.

After you have written your grievance, you should send it to the VPCH Quality Department. Any member of the staff can provide you with an envelope and will ensure that the grievance gets delivered to Quality.

Within 7 business days from the day that the Quality Department receives your grievance you will usually get a written response about your grievance from a member of the VPCH management team, informing you of the steps taken on your behalf to investigate the grievance and the results of the grievance process. If your grievance requires more time to review or investigate, you will receive a letter letting you know that the response from the hospital will be sent to you as soon as possible and within 21 days.

Appeal to the Chief Executive Officer

If you are not satisfied with the response to your initial grievance, you may appeal the response to the Chief Executive Officer of the hospital. You appeal by sending a letter to the Quality Department explaining what happened and why you are not satisfied with the response to your grievance. You need to send the appeal letter within 10 days of the day you receive the initial response. If for some reason you cannot appeal the decision within 10 days, you may mail a request for more time to the Quality Department.

Within 10 business days of receiving your appeal, the Chief Executive Officer will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your complaint or concern. You may bring a friend or another representative with you to this meeting. The meeting will be informal, but you are allowed to ask questions of personnel, present any information that you want to and have the meeting tape recorded. Within 10 business days of the meeting, the Chief Executive Officer or their designee will send you a written response to your appeal.

Grievances – How to File a Grievance

Appeal to the Commissioner

If you are not satisfied with the response by the Chief Executive Officer, you may submit an appeal to the Commissioner of mental health. To appeal to the Commissioner, you should send a letter to the Quality Department explaining what happened and why you are not satisfied with the response. You must send the appeal letter within 10 days of the day you receive the response from the Chief Executive Officer. If for some reason you cannot appeal the decision within 10 days, you may mail a request for more time to the Quality Department.

Within 10 business days of receiving the notice of appeal, the Commissioner, or someone designated by the Commissioner, will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your complaint or concern. You may bring a friend or another representative with you to this meeting. The meeting will be informal, but you will be allowed to ask questions of personnel, present any information, and have the meeting tape recorded. Within 10 business days of the meeting, the Commissioner or their designee will send you a written response to your appeal.

VPCH personnel will provide you with a copy of the VPCH grievance and appeal policy and procedure at your request.

The VPCH Quality Director, or designee, is available to discuss and answer any questions you may have about the grievance process.

If you need assistance with filing a grievance, following up on an appeal of a grievance, or require assistance with concerns, you may contact the protection and advocacy organization for the State of Vermont:

Disability Rights Vermont
 141 Main Street, Suite 7
 Montpelier VT, 05602
 1-800-834-7890 or 1-802-229-1355.

Other places you may file a complaint

In addition to filing a grievance or instead of filing a grievance, you may, at any time, file a grievance directly with the Department of Mental Health, the Vermont Board of Health and/or the Vermont Medical Practice Board by forwarding the grievance to:

Commissioner
 Department of Mental Health
 280 State Drive, NOB 2N
 Waterbury, VT 05671-2010
 1-(802) 828-3824

Board of Health/ Board of Medical Practice
 Vermont Department of Health
 P.O. Box 70
 Burlington, VT 05402-0070
 1-(802) 657-4220; (800) 745-7371

Grievances – How to File a Grievance

Other places you may file a complaint

You may complain about abuse, neglect, or exploitation by contacting the state agency responsible for investigating such complaints by writing or calling:

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
103 S Main St.
Waterbury, VT 05671

If you are a Medicare beneficiary and are concerned about the quality of health care you have received or premature discharge, you may file a complaint with Livanta. Livanta is the organization charged with reviewing the appropriateness and quality of care rendered to Medicare beneficiaries in hospital settings. Concerns or complaints can be sent to:

Livanta
BFCC-QIO Program, Area 1
9090 Junction Drive, Suite 10
Annapolis Junction, MD 20701
Toll-free: 1 866- 815-5440
TTY: 1 866-815-2289
<http://bfccqioarea1.com>

If you have a concern about safety or the quality of care, you file a complaint with The Joint Commission at:

- The Joint Commission’s safety event phone line – 1-800-994-6610
- At www.jointcommission.org, using the “Report a Patient Safety Event” link in the “Action Center” on the home page of the website.
- By fax to 630-792-5636.
- By mail to “The Office of Quality and Patient Safety (OQPS), The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois 60181.



SECTION THREE: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Legal Services

Vermont Legal Aid (VLA) is a private non-profit corporation and is not part of the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital. VLA staff members are available to assist you with issues related to your ongoing hospitalization at VPCH. Their phone number is 1-802-241-3222. Any information that you give to a staff member of VLA is considered confidential.

The hospital's legal department and Vermont Legal Aid are separate organizations.

Vermont Disability Rights can be contacted at:

Disability Rights Vermont
141 Main Street, Suite 7
Montpelier VT, 05602
1-800-834-7890 or 1-802-229-1355.



Confidentiality

Protected health information is always held in confidence, as required by federal and state law and as reflected in our own values as health care providers at the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital.

At the time you are admitted, a Nurse will ask you your preference about receiving phone calls through the nursing station. We can either confirm that you are hospitalized at VPCH and put the telephone call through to you on a unit telephone, or we can inform the caller that confidentiality prohibits us from confirming that you are at VPCH. We are unable to screen calls. If you want family, friends, and others to know that you are hospitalized at VPCH, please inform them you are here and give them the telephone number of the phones on the unit.

Forensic Evaluations

If you have pending criminal charges and are referred by the district court for observation and evaluation of competency and/or sanity, an outside forensic psychiatrist will come to VPCH to perform this evaluation. The forensic psychiatrist will visit with you once or several times, have access to your medical record, and will consult with your treatment team. This psychiatrist provides a written report to the court, to your defense attorney and to the state's attorney. The forensic psychiatrist will also testify at court hearings but will not provide treatment for you while at VPCH.

If you have been referred to VPCH by a judge, you will be treated the same as all other individuals – you will have an assigned VPCH psychiatrist and other members of a treatment team, will work with your team to develop a treatment plan, and will be encouraged to participate in all aspects of hospitalization.

Advocates

Advocates may visit you, and with your written consent, may read your chart in the presence of personnel. They may not remove the chart from the unit, photograph or photocopy it. With your written permission, the advocate may submit a request for photocopies of your medical records.

Advocates may request a tour of the unit. Advocates may file a grievance or complaint on your behalf.

Advocates will follow the general rules for visitors. (See exceptions for DRVT and DMH patient representative in the Visitors section of this Handbook).

If you wish to meet with an advocate, personnel can assist you in arranging a meeting.

In addition to the rights of other advocates, advocates from Disability Rights Vermont may review records without your consent if they have reason to believe that abuse, neglect, or exploitation may have occurred.

Multidisciplinary Team Approach

Everyone admitted to the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital is part of a team working on their treatment plan. Each team member assigned to your team has their own unique training, area of expertise, and ability to contribute to your treatment planning. You have a right to participate in treatment planning and to request a support person or other advocate attend as well. You have a right to request that individuals not be able to attend your treatment planning meetings.

You will be assigned a Psychiatrist, a Registered Nurse, and a Social Worker who will work with you to develop and carry out a plan for your care. Many other professionals and support staff will contribute to your treatment at the hospital.



Other hospital providers include Pharmacy staff, Psychologists, Recovery Services staff and Mental Health Specialists.

Additional specialties that are available include primary and specialty Physician care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and hearing services. A Physician is available on site 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Others supporting your stay here will include custodial staff and facilities. If you have questions about any role, feel free to ask a Nurse or other treatment team member.

My Treatment Team

Physician/Psychiatrist:

Nurse: _____

Social worker: _____

Recovery Services Clinician: _____

Family Member/Friend: _____

Other team members I work with: _____
