

<b>Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Policy and Procedure</b>		
<b>Internet Access for Hospitalized Individuals</b>		
Effective: 4/7/2014	Revised: October 2023	Due to Review: October 2025

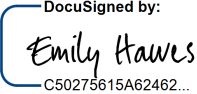
## **POLICY**

The Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH) recognizes that internet access is vital to fully participating in modern society, and is an essential tool for work, finance, education, and social connection. Individuals can use the internet to stay in contact with members of their social network, to gather information about their illness and treatment options, to assist in discharge planning, to maintain community supports, for leisure purposes, as a de-escalation tool, as a normalizing social experience, and to gain skills and knowledge about using computers and the internet.

Access to the internet will be subject to discussion with a hospitalized individual's treatment team. If there is a safety condition that warrants limiting use of the internet, the rationale for imposing such limits shall be documented in the medical record. Limitations on internet usage shall be reviewed by the treatment team regularly for continuing necessity. When the hospitalized person or interested third parties request such a review, the treatment team shall initiate it the next business day. Internet use may be limited or supervised if a hospitalized person uses the internet for purposes that are abusive, obscene, threatening, legally prohibited, or what can be considered harassing.

## **PROCEDURE**

- Upon admission, each hospitalized individual shall be assigned an electronic tablet for their personal use on the unit. Tablets shall not be shared.
- Access to an electronic tablet shall be granted by the treatment team and will require a physician order. The decision to grant or restrict tablet access shall be based solely on safety considerations.
- Tablet distribution and monitoring shall occur in accordance with the written physician order, however nursing can exercise stricter restrictions if safety warrants.
- Tablets will be charged and stored in the treatment planning room when not in use.
- VPCH staff reserve the right to periodically review internet browsing history to ensure that the internet is being used in a safe and responsible manner.
- Upon discharge, tablets will be factory reset to ensure that any personalized data stored on the tablet is not accessible by the next person to whom that device is assigned.
- The internet will also be accessible from desktop computers in the library. Because the library is a public space, and the computers are accessible to multiple users, VPCH utilizes software and processes that will protect electronic information and limit access to certain content i.e.: pornographic content and extreme violence.

Approved by	Signature	Date
Emily Hawes Commissioner Vermont Department of Mental Health	 <p>DocuSigned by: <i>Emily Hawes</i> C50275615A62462...</p>	11/9/2023