

CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL  
POLICY

SUBJECT: **CLIENT ACCESS TO TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION**

ANNUAL REVIEW MONTH: August

RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW: Director, Customer Relations

LAST REVISION DATE: February 2008

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Clients shall have the right to communicate freely and privately with persons outside the hospital, and one means of communication is through the use of the telephone.

Clients shall have the right to receive and make a reasonable number of calls at their own expense during specified times unless it is specifically prohibited, in writing, by the attending physician. Employees will assist clients in exercising this right.

The treatment team may make recommendations concerning the clients' use of telephones. (i) The restriction must be required by the seriousness of the client's mental condition and must be ordered by the client's attending physician. (ii) The type and extent of the restriction, along with the specific reason for the restriction must be stated on the order. (iii) The order shall expire automatically 24 hours after it is given, unless it is terminated sooner, but additional 24-hour orders may be given according to the same procedure as that required for the original order.

If therapeutic indications necessitate restrictions on a client's telephone communication, such restrictions will be fully explained with the participation of the client/family. Further, any restrictions on a client's telephone communication must be evaluated for its therapeutic effectiveness; therefore, the following actions will occur to ensure that there is close, careful review of such restrictions:

1. The service area medical director will review all cases where therapeutic indications necessitate restrictions and will ensure those restrictions are evaluated for their therapeutic effectiveness by clinically responsible staff at least every three days or at intervals consistent with ongoing care review and the average length of stay. Note: These actions do not apply during episodes of seclusion/restraint. These actions also do not apply to clients admitted under certain legal restrictions.

2. A Critical Incident Report is to be completed in all cases when the client is placed on telephone restrictions.

The client may consent in writing to restrictions to the use of the telephones.

In compliance with the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Human Resources (DHR), (Patient Rights) 290-4-6.03 (4) 2. (I) and (iii), the client's communications with his/her attorney or private physician will not be restricted.

Clients should be assisted in gaining access to coin operated telephones to make long distance calls except in those cases where the attending physician has restricted telephone calls by a written order.

When a client lacks the necessary funds and immediate contact with someone appears to be urgent, a reasonable number of long distance calls may be authorized by the service chief/designee.

**Approved:**

**This policy has been approved by the CEO and CMO in March, 2008.**