

Questions for Stakeholder Meeting – Acute Psychiatric Hospitals

The Center for Health Care Quality (CHCQ) within the California Department of Public Health (Department) is revising the regulations governing acute psychiatric hospitals under Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). CHCQ is seeking input from interested stakeholders to ensure the proposed regulatory updates are consistent with other laws and regulations, modern facility practices, and other relevant standards.

The proposed regulations would affect the following sections within Title 22:

71211. Psychiatric Nursing Service Definition.

71213. Psychiatric Nursing Service General Requirements.

71215. Psychiatric Nursing Service Staff.

71217. Psychiatric Nursing Service Equipment and Supplies.

71219. Psychiatric Nursing Service Space.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the method used by acute psychiatric hospitals to determine real-time staffing needs?
2. What is the minimum nurse to patient ratio needed for a unit that cares for adults? Is the minimum staffing the same for every shift? How should other mental health workers be included in the nursing ratio? Please explain.
3. Is there a need for different staffing levels depending on the age of patients, such as children or adolescents? How should other mental health workers be included in the nursing ratio? Please explain.
4. Which factors are considered when determining additional staffing requirements above the minimum ratios. Do you include the following?
 - a. Patient acuity, for example, risk of harm to self or others.
 - b. The results of an environmental risk assessment completed to ensure the patient receives care in a safe setting pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations section 482.13(c)(2).
 - c. The need for active clinical care including assessment, treatment, and discharge planning.
5. General Acute Care Hospitals have a process wherein a committee reviews and validates the system used to determine staffing requirements at least annually, should Acute Psychiatric Hospitals have a similar process? Please explain.
6. Do you have any further recommendations for the Department to consider when drafting acute psychiatric hospital nurse to patient ratio regulations?