

College Hospital Cerritos Response to Questions for APH Stakeholder Meeting

1. What is the method used by acute psychiatric hospitals to determine real-time staffing needs?

- A. College Hospital Cerritos (CHC) utilizes an acuity system to determine staffing needs for each department based upon the patient acuity of each department.

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.

- A. Title 22 71215(4)(d) requires each nursing unit to have a registered nurse, licensed vocational nurse, or licensed psychiatric technician on duty at all times.

The staffing ratio depends on the shift and acuity of the unit which includes the Mental Health Workers (non-licensed staff).

In a psychiatric setting, an Interdisciplinary Treatment Team comprised of different disciplines (Nursing, Social Services, Activity Therapy, Behavior Team) work together to provide care for the patients. The nature of psychiatric treatment depends heavily on the Interdisciplinary Treatment Team and not solely on licensed nurses. While patients attend a group activity, for instance, they are monitored not just by the MHWs, but also by the discipline that is providing the group.

We include the Mental Health Workers (MHWs) in the staffing as they are supervised by the licensed nursing staff. The MHWs perform rounds at least every 15 minutes (preventing suicide attempts, physical altercation between patients), assist with ADLs, and assist the RN in the admission process. The skill set for MHWs is appropriate and sufficient to monitor for patient safety, which does not necessarily require licensed nurses to perform, since the MHWs are trained to inform licensed staff when appropriate.

In an acute care setting, patients are mostly bed-ridden, inside their rooms, where it's easier for RNs to monitor and supervise patients. In a psychiatric care setting, patients are mobile. They are walking around the unit, attending group activities, meeting with doctors and discharge planners, etc. Utilizing MHWs allows us to have more eyes on the patients. Having many eyes on patients helps to avert adverse events.

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.

- A. We staff based upon acuity and not the age of the patient. See above regarding Mental Health Workers.

4. *Which factors are considered when determining additional staffing requirements above the minimum ratio? Do you include the following?*
- a. *Patient acuity, for example, risk of harm to self or others*
 - A. Yes (aggressive/assaultive behavior, patients on seclusion and restraints, 1:1, self-harm behaviors, severely disruptive to milieu, elopement attempt, active unstable detox)
 - 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).*
 - A. Yes (ligature risk and environmental risk)
 - c. *The need for active clinical care including assessment, treatment, and discharge planning.*
 - A. Yes (admission, discharges, assessments, and treatment 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.*
- A. CHC reviews both the staffing requirements and acuity system at least annually (and as needed) and adjustments are made accordingly.
6. *Do you have any further recommendations for the Department to consider when drafting acute psychiatric hospital nurse to patient ratio regulations?*
- A. CHC utilizes Team Nursing, instead of primary care nursing, as this is what is in the best interest of the patients. Team Nursing provides for an interdisciplinary approach to psychiatric treatment. In addition, CHC utilizes Mental Health Workers, supervised by licensed nursing staff, in its staffing matrix. MHWs perform duties and responsibilities that do not necessarily require a licensed nurse to perform. This gives the unit more eyes to provide the best and safest psychiatric care.