



The Cutting Edge

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN NJ

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

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Spotlight On: Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD)

The New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) has recently launched a secure online registry for individuals to register their Psychiatric Advance Directive on a voluntary basis.

What is a Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD)?

A Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD) is a plan that allows a person to specify important information for caregivers in the event of a mental health crisis. This PAD can provide valuable information for providers to reference and follow during a crisis.

Considered by many as a tool as important as a medical Advance Directive, a PAD is valued by persons living with mental health conditions. Comments from PAD users include: "I was there as a peer when a PAD was followed in the emergency room. It really helped the person who was having the crisis."; "The PAD gave me the chance to talk to my doctor about my wishes."; "It helped to open a line of communication with my son, who is now my representative."

How Does a PAD Work?

- A PAD enables documentation of personal preferences when an individual is feeling well, communicating to providers which treatments and medications are preferred and which to avoid.
- A PAD provides the option to appoint a representative to make decisions on behalf of the individual during a time of crisis.
- Preparing a PAD presents the opportunity to seek input about treatment from other trusted individuals.

New Secure Online Registry to Improve PAD Access and Use

Federal and state laws ensure that people with mental illnesses, like all health care consumers, have the right to indicate their health care choices in situations where their illness might prevent them from directly expressing their preferences. Individuals have the

option to choose whether to participate in the secure online registry. All information will be treated as confidential protected health information.

“The rollout of this secure registry for Psychiatric Advanced Directives is a huge step forward in providing health care providers access to the plans made by people with mental illnesses,” according to DMHAS Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke.

The electronic registry, called NJPAD, will be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It complies with N.J.A.C. 10:32, Advance Directives for Mental Health Care which requires access to the registry through the internet. NJPAD will be operated by U.S. Advance Care Plan Registry (USACPR) powered by U. S. Living Will Registry (USLWR.)

NJPAD will be accessible only to persons submitting their PADS and to certain New Jersey mental health care providers which will have immediate and streamlined access. Currently, designated DMHAS psychiatric emergency services, affiliated psychiatric emergency services, and short term care facilities have provider access to the Registry.

The Mental Health Association in New Jersey has been conducting advocacy and training initiatives over the last several years to increase the understanding and acceptance of Psychiatric Advance Directives with consumers of mental health services, physicians and health care providers.

PAD Forms and Instructions Available

[Click here for forms and more information about PADS.](#) [Click here to register on NJPAD.](#) If you need assistance with the process, feel free to call NJ MentalHealthCares, toll-free, at 866-202-HELP (4357).



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