

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Forensic Services oversees, coordinates, and provides all forensic mental health evaluation and treatment services for the Department of Human Services - Division of Mental Health. A primary responsibility of Forensic services is coordinating the inpatient and outpatient placements of adults and juveniles remanded by Illinois County Courts to the Department of Human Services under Statutes finding them Unfit to Stand Trial (UST) (725 ILCS, 104 -16) and Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) (730 ILCS, 5/5-2-4). Placement evaluation responsibilities include: (1) on site evaluation of individuals held in County Jails or Juvenile Detention Centers, and (2) outpatient placement evaluations of individuals who are remanded to DHS-DMH under fitness and insanity statutes but not in custody of county jails or detention centers. Placement evaluations determine the most appropriate inpatient or outpatient setting for forensic treatment based on a number of factors including age, gender, mental health diagnosis, and security need. Unless a person is specifically ordered to receive services in an outpatient setting, court ordered referrals under state forensic statutes call for placement in a secure inpatient setting. The secure state operated inpatient facilities that service the adult forensic UST and NGRI population include the following:

Alton MHC

Adult Males & Females with Mental Illness & Intellectual Disabilities – Minimum & Medium Security

Chester MHC

Adult Males with Mental Illness and/or Intellectual Disabilities – Medium & Maximum Security

Choate MHC

Adult Males with Intellectual Disabilities - Medium Security within the restriction of operating a secure program, Choate is operated as an ICF/DD (intermediate care facility for the developmentally disabled). This forensic unit is administered by the DHS Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Elgin MHC

Adult Males and Females with Mental Illness – Minimum & Medium Security

McFarland MHC

Adult Males and Females with Mental Illness – Minimum & Medium Security

***Juvenile Male & Female forensic treatment** is coordinated through community providers.

Forensic Facility Security Level Information:

The Department of Human Services - Forensic Services essentially has three general security levels for forensic inpatients.

(1) Minimum Security (formerly Non-Secure) - This type of unit typically serves civil inpatients. The general unit structure is secure with locked doors, including 24/7 staff supervision, security

services and controlled access. Residents need an approved grounds pass before they may leave unescorted. Currently, Minimum Security placement can only be used for forensic patients, typically those with misdemeanors, non-violent offenses, and low elopement risk, with prior approval by the courts.

(2) Medium Security - All areas of the State are served by a unit which fits this category. Fenced recreation areas, security screens, controlled access, and limitations on allowed personal items serve to differentiate these units from other units in the Department.

(3) Maximum Security - Chester Mental Health Center is the only State operated hospital with maximum security units and is the highest level of security available in the Department. The maximum security program at Chester has substantially restricted movement, specialized physical plant and monitoring, and nearly continuous observation. It allows for more physically dangerous or assaultive patients to be treated as well as those who present substantial escape potential. Chester MHC also has one Medium Security UST unit with reduced in-building restrictions.

Again, the Illinois Legislature has mandated by statute that all defendants found Unfit to Stand Trial (UST) or those defendants found Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) are to be housed in a secure setting of the Department unless the criminal court orders otherwise. The court must also give prior approval before such defendants are granted any privileges such as being unescorted while on facility grounds and when being taken in the community. As a result of this, the overwhelming majority of such persons are housed either at the maximum security Chester Mental Health Center or in a medium security unit at Alton, Choate, Elgin, or McFarland MHCs.

Additional Major Areas of Forensic Program Responsibility:

- Review and Final approval of conditional release recommendations for inpatients in NGRI legal status.
- Review, evaluation, and admission approval for Behavior Management Referrals to Chester MHC from other state facilities. Behavior management referrals result from combative and high elopement risk civil and forensic patients who cannot be managed in a minimum or medium security state operated mental health inpatient facility or unit.
- Placement review of Dixon Correctional Center inmates subject to civil commitment upon release from prison.
- Development of outpatient treatment options for individuals in NGRI legal status and monitoring and tracking of conditionally released NGRI clients receiving services in outpatient settings.
- Development of outpatient treatment options for individuals in UST legal status and monitoring and tracking of UST clients receiving services in outpatient settings.

- Program monitoring of community Inpatient Juvenile Forensic Sites
- Administrative Oversight for the Sexually Violent Persons (SVP) - Treatment and Detention Facility in Rushville, Illinois.