



POLICY DIRECTIVE

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| Policy: | DOC 4.5.61 MENTAL HEALTH AND SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS CLASSIFICATION |
| Effective Date: | 11/04/2021 Page 1 of 3 |
| Revision Date(s): | 04/24/2026 |
| Department Director Signature: | /s/ Eric Strauss, Director |
| Medical Director Signature: | /s/ Dr. Paul Rees, MD |
| Health Services Bureau Chief Signature: | /s/ Cynthia McGillis-Hiner, RN, MSN |

I. POLICY

Establish standard protocols for the determination of the mental health status and mental health service needs of offenders.

II. APPLICABILITY

All secure care facilities Department-owned and contracted, as specific in the contract.

III. DEFINITIONS (see Glossary)

IV. REQUIREMENTS

A. General Requirements

1. At Department facilities, the Mental Health Level Classification System (MHL) provides a standard approach through which the mental health status and service needs of individual offenders may be examined.
2. The Mental Health Level Classification System (MHL) provides information regarding offenders who have special treatment needs or who may present special management concerns.
3. The MHL Classification System provides information that can be used for program planning and administrative purposes, as well as in the allocation of current and future resources.
4. When an MHL Classification is assigned, it should reflect the offender's current mental status and service needs and not be based solely on a history of treatment.

B. Criteria

1. A Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) will determine MHL and SMI during intake and will assess regularly, but no later than annually as determined by NCCHC standards. The QMHP will utilize a *Severe Mental Illness Determination* form for the initial evaluation.
2. The Mental Health Level Classification system criteria are as follows:
 - a. MH-4 Severe Impairment:

- 1) The offender has a current mental health diagnosis and is currently experiencing acute symptom severity and needs.
 - 2) The offender could be Severely Mentally Ill (SMI).
 - 3) The offender is either a danger to self or to others or is substantially unable to care for self.
 - 4) The offender may be prescribed psychotropic medications.
 - 5) The offender must have a documented current significant DSM diagnosis that led the individual to experience significant functional impairment or has consistently demonstrated dysfunctional or disruptive social interactions including withdrawal, bizarre or disruptive behavior, etc., as a consequence of any mental health diagnosis set out in the DSM.
 - 6) Acute, intensive, or stabilization mental health treatment is recommended.
- b. MH-3 Moderate Impairment:
- 1) The offender has a current DSM mental health diagnosis and is currently experiencing significant symptom severity and needs or is currently properly managing acute symptoms.
 - 2) The offender has an ongoing mental disorder and may be frequently unstable. The offender typically cannot function in the general population for extended periods of time and requires ongoing or periodic mental health monitoring or mental health monitoring and treatment.
 - 3) The offender may be prescribed psychotropic medications.
 - 4) This category typically includes:
 - a) offenders previously assigned as MH-4 who have been stabilized; or
 - b) offenders receiving stabilization treatment
- c. MH-2 Mild Impairment:
- 1) The offender has a current DSM mental health diagnosis and is currently experiencing moderate impairment and needs or is currently properly managing significant symptoms.
 - 2) The individual can typically function satisfactorily in a general population setting for extended periods. Monitoring by a therapist may be necessary.
 - 3) The offender may be prescribed psychotropic medication.
- d. MH – 1 Minimum Impairment:
- 1) The offender may have a history of mental health issues or current mental health diagnosis but is stable and has a high degree of symptom management.
 - 2) The offender does not currently require mental health treatment but has a history of self-directed violence, suicidal gestures or attempts, or mental health treatment within the past two years.
 - 3) The offender is not prescribed psychotropic medication and can function satisfactorily in a general population setting.
- e. MH-0 No Evidence of Mental Health Needs:
- 1) The offender has no documented history of mental health treatment within the past year (documented history does not include treatment for substance use alone, nor for evaluation purposes alone).
 - 2) There is no documented or reported behavior that currently indicates any mental health service needs.
 - 3) No monitoring or treatment by mental health is currently required.

C. Severe Mental Illness Classification

1. An offender with an MH 03 and 04 classification may be considered Severely Mentally Ill and will be subjected to additional criteria. The QMHP makes determinations regarding classification by the information provided by the offender and the resources made available to the QMHP. The offender must meet at least one of the following:

- a. the offender has undergone psychiatric treatment more intensive than outpatient care more than once in a lifetime, such as emergency services, alternative residential living, or inpatient psychiatric hospitalization;
 - b. the offender has experienced a single episode of psychiatric hospitalization with a diagnosis of a major disorder, or
 - c. the offender has frequent crisis contact with a community health center or another mental health provider for more than 6 months as a result of a mental illness.
2. The offender must also meet at least 3 of the following criteria:
 - a. the offender is unemployed or has markedly limited job skills or poor work history;
 - b. the offender exhibits inappropriate social behavior that results in concern by the community or requests for mental health or legal intervention;
 - c. the offender has been unable to obtain public services without assistance;
 - d. the offender requires public financial assistance for out-of-hospital maintenance, has difficulty budgeting public financial assistance, requires ongoing training in budgeting skills, or needs a payee;
 - e. the offender lacks social support systems in a natural environment, such as close friends and family, or the client lived alone or is isolated; or
 - f. the offender is unable to perform basic daily living skills without assistance.

D. Mental Health Modifiers

1. Mental Health modifiers are attached to the Mental Health Level to act as descriptors of an offender's behavior and as indicators of what support or service an offender may need.
2. Mental Health modifiers are assessed at every clinical interaction. The modifier that is most fitting for the current period of time is the one that is used.
 - a. The following modifier comes before the mental health classification number and indicates if the offender has a Severe Mental Illness (SMI), for example, MH-S3 (offender with a mental health level of 3 and meets SMI criteria).
 - 1) S - Severely Mentally Ill (SMI)
 - b. The following modifiers come after the number and are descriptive for both clinicians and other staff who work with the offender, for example, MH-S3P (offender with a mental health level of 3 that meets the SMI criteria and has a psychotic disorder, so the offender can be expected to talk to the offender's self and not be in the right mind, etc.).
 - 1) C – Cognitive impairment (for example, TBI, FAS, dementia, Huntington's symptoms, substance-induced cognitive symptoms).
 - 2) P – Psychotic disorder (for example, Schizophrenia)
 - 3) M – Mood disorder (for example, depression, bipolar)
 - 4) A – Anxiety disorder (including PTSD, generalized anxiety)
 - 5) PD – Personality disorders (for example, Borderline, Antisocial, Narcissistic)
 - 6) T – Temporary (used for those who have adjustment issues or going through process of ruling out diagnoses; T qualifiers should not be retained for more than 6 months).

V. CLOSING

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Health Services Bureau Chief.

VI. REFERENCES

- A. 53-21-102, MCA
- B. *Bureau of Prisons Policy Statement 5310.16, Treatment and Care of Inmates with Mental Illness*

VII. FORM

Severe Mental Illness Determination