

To: Somerset County Mental Health Board
Somerset County Systems Review Committee
Somerset County Mental Health Providers/PAC
Somerset County Family, Consumer and MH Advocacy organizations
New Jersey Department of Health Division Mental Health and Addiction Services

From: Cory Storch, President & CEO Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services

Re: Somerset County Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services Waiver Request
(N.J.A.C. 10-31-2.3)

Date: April 4, 2024

In accordance with the New Jersey Screening and Screening Outreach Program regulations, Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services, is respectfully submitting the following waiver requests for the Somerset County Psychiatric Emergency Screening Service (PESS):

N.J.A.C. 10-31-2.1 (a) 8 Functions of a Screening Service, Operation of Extended Crisis Evaluation Bed “A screening service shall perform the following functions: Provision of extended crisis evaluation bed(s) (ECEBs) with 24-hour capability, for the purpose of assessment, intensive supervision, medication monitoring and crisis stabilization;” The Bridgeway PESS model is an outpatient service providing community based psychiatric emergency screening services. As such, this service is housed in the community and is not hospital based therefore, without a current Somerset County ECEB hospital partner; Bridgeway is not able to provide this service.

Bridgeway Somerset County PESS will focus on early intervention and community provider engagement in order to minimize the need for extended crisis evaluation beds. Early intervention in conjunction with rapid linkage to existing community services will provide alternatives to crisis evaluation beds by offering less restrictive, more recovery-oriented interventions. Bridgeway will adhere to the provisions set forth in N.J.C.A.10-31-11 in the provision of this service should this waiver be granted.

Rational for this waiver request:

- Bridgeway has developed a protocol to work with a RWJ Somerset-Barnabas Physician to ensure more access to in person psychiatry on an ongoing basis. This is the first step in continuing the discussion and development of a partnership in the provision of Extended Crisis Evaluation Beds. Once a formal agreement is reached, with approval from the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, notification will take place to all stakeholders. In the new protocol the RWJ Somerset-Barnabas Physician may complete one of the possibly two Clinical Certificates in the involuntary commitment process. In the current affiliation agreement RWJ Barnabas Health has agreed to provide medical clearance, housing persons in the process of involuntary commitment, nursing staffing, housekeeping, and dietary. There are no other hospital systems in Somerset County with which to partner for this ECEBs.
- Should Bridgeway provide the ECEBs within the PESS outpatient, non-hospital based model, the cost would be in excess of \$650,000 per year. This cost would include: additional space to house the ECEB equipment and additional medical equipment; 24/7

psychiatric and nursing staff; housekeeping, dietary and compliance staff; OSHA and Department of Health regulation procedures and practices; and additional compliance procedures.

Comments and/or questions regarding the waiver requests above will be received for a period of 62 days from the date of this notification. The Somerset County Mental Health Board meeting is scheduled for June 6, 2024 and 5:00pm and held via zoom:

Mental Health Board
June 6, 2024 5:00 PM
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/96422219499>
Meeting ID: 964 2221 9499
One tap mobile +1 929 205 6099

This notification is in compliance with N.J.A.C. 10:31-11.2. Please contact the following with your comments and/or questions:

<p>John Verney, MSW, LSW Regional Coordinator New Jersey Dept of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services 100 Hamilton Plaza, Box 4 Paterson, NJ 07505 (973-977-4397)</p> <p>Theresa Wilson MSW, LSW Assistant Regional Coordinator State of NJ-DHS Division Mental Health and Addiction Services 100 Hamilton Plaza, Suite 615 PO box 4 Paterson, NJ 07505 (973-977-4397)</p>	<p>Michael J. Frost, Director, Somerset County Human Services Department of Human Services 27 Warren Street, PO Box 3000 Somerville, NJ 08876 (908-704-6300)</p>
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