



DIS UPDATE

- RESPONDING TO COVID-19

Special Care Unit Preparation

Responding to COVID-19

In response to current demands related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, an Inpatient Services plan was developed to rapidly respond to patient/resident needs in alignment with the community spread of COVID-19 and projections over the coming months. Our priority during the COVID-19 Pandemic is to protect our most vulnerable patients and residents.

The Strategy was to draw down our census by limiting our admissions and discharging patients who could be discharged in order to protect our most vulnerable patients/residents who will not likely be discharged within the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Concurrently, we assessed and projected the level of resources needed to sustain care for those most vulnerable, meet the treatment needs for patients with Covid-19, establish options for isolation and quarantine, accommodate emergency admissions, and support a staffing reserve needed to sustain services in the face of staff illness and/or burnout.

Psychiatric and Long Term Care Active Treatment and Space Design Team

As Inpatient Services works to provide quality services and a safe environment during the COVID-19 Pandemic, consideration must be given to our most vulnerable patients and residents who share a congregate environment and are unable to leave their respective facility. On May 5, 2020, a Psychiatric and Long Term Care Active Treatment and Space Design Team was appointed by the Deputy Director for Inpatient Services.

The charge of the team was to complete an assessment of all existing DIS facility space and potential spaces to support a safe therapeutic environment in consideration of slowed admissions, CDC guidelines for safe distancing, and strategies for quality active treatment. The team completed its review on May 20, 2020, and the plan is currently being reviewed by the DIS Leadership.

Examination of current treatment space and approaches will be critical in determining modifications needed to decrease risks to patients, residents, and staff within current and potential space as required. The plan will also assist the DIS Leadership in determining the impact on current staffing standards and the ability to maximize current staffing to cover for greater numbers of patient groups and safe distancing guidelines.

Nursing Float Pool Initiative

In March 2020, Inpatient Services Nursing Services, in collaboration with the SCDMH Human Resources Department, established a Float Pool with a hiring goal of:

- 12 Registered Nurse Positions
- 12 Licensed Practical Nurse Positions
- 16 Certified Nursing Assistants and
- 14 Behavioral Assistants.

These positions are budgeted by existing vacant positions across Division of Inpatient Services, and candidates are offered attractive schedules (three, 12- hour shifts per week) and a Float Pool Pay Supplement (40%).

Special Care Unit, Alternate Care Sites, and additional Isolation and Quarantine Needs

In March, 2020, Inpatient Services began review of possible Alternate Care Sites to increase our capacity for isolation and quarantine. The vacant Infirmary space within the Morris Village was approved by DHEC as an alternative site for Bryan Psychiatric Hospital patients.

A Special Care Unit Operations Team will be responsible for the development and oversight of the Special Care Unit. It is anticipated DHEC will survey the facility for readiness within the next two weeks.

In addition, the Division of Inpatient Services is also exploring contracting for additional space. If in the event we are able to contract for additional space, this would increase our capacity for isolation and quarantine to support increased forensic admissions.