Policy Title: Release of Patient/Client Information

Scope: All facilities operated by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health shall utilize the stated policy governing the release of patient/client information.

Policy: To ensure the privacy of patients/clients of the Department of Mental Health and to comply with the laws of the State of Mississippi, it shall be the policy of the Board of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health to release patient/client information pursuant to the established policy.

Procedure: I. AUTHORITY TO RELEASE

Information concerning a current or former patient/client shall be released only:

A. Upon written authorization of the patient/client or authorized representative.

B. Upon order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

C. When the continued treatment of the patient/client requires the exchange

of information between facilities of the Department of Mental Health, community or regional mental health centers, or alcohol treatment programs.

D. When, in the opinion of the Director of the facility, release of information is necessary for the determination of eligibility for benefits, compliance with statutory reporting requirements, or other lawful purpose.

E. When the patient/client has communicated to a treating physician, psychologist, or master social worker an actual threat of physical violence against a clearly identified or reasonably identifiable potential victim or victims.

II. REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTS

When information is requested:

A. The appropriate facility must be in receipt of written authorization or authority for release of information prior to any search of records.

B. Upon request for release, the facility will make every effort to comply with request within five (5) working days. If for some reason this is impractical, the facility will notify the person requesting the information of the delay and the approximate time the information will be available.

C. Release of information to potential victims under I(E) will be made as soon as possible.

D. Request for information must be specific as to whether all available information or what part thereof is being requested.

E. Estimates as to cost will be made upon request.

F. Fees charged will be according to the following schedule:

Photocopies - $10.00 for first five pages and $1.00 for every page thereafter.

G. Requested information will not be released until fees are paid.