

- **Ohio Revised Code**
- » **Title [51] LI PUBLIC WELFARE**
- » **Chapter 5122: HOSPITALIZATION OF MENTALLY ILL**

5122.31 Confidentiality.

(A) All certificates, applications, records, and reports made for the purpose of this chapter and sections [2945.38](#), [2945.39](#), [2945.40](#), [2945.401](#), and [2945.402](#) of the Revised Code, other than court journal entries or court docket entries, and directly or indirectly identifying a patient or former patient or person whose hospitalization has been sought under this chapter, shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed by any person except:

(1) If the person identified, or the person's legal guardian, if any, or if the person is a minor, the person's parent or legal guardian, consents, and if the disclosure is in the best interests of the person, as may be determined by the court for judicial records and by the chief clinical officer for medical records; *(Traditional Release of Information)*

(2) When disclosure is provided for in this chapter or section [5123.60](#) of the Revised Code; *(Ohio Legal Rights Service access to records.)*

(3) That hospitals, boards of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services, and community mental health agencies may release necessary medical information to insurers and other third-party payers, including government entities responsible for *processing and authorizing payment*, to obtain payment for goods and services furnished to the patient;

(4) Pursuant to a *court order* signed by a judge;

(5) That a patient shall be granted access to the patient's own psychiatric and medical *records*, unless access specifically is restricted in a patient's treatment plan for clear treatment reasons;

(6) That hospitals and other institutions and facilities within the department of mental health may exchange psychiatric records and other pertinent information with other hospitals, institutions, and facilities of the department, and with community mental health agencies and boards of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services with which the department has a *current agreement for patient care or services*. Records and information that may be released pursuant to this division shall be limited to medication history, physical health status and history, financial status, summary of course of treatment in the hospital, summary of treatment needs, and a discharge summary, if any.

(7) That hospitals within the department, other institutions and facilities within the department, and community mental health agencies may exchange psychiatric records and other pertinent information with other providers of treatment and health services if the purpose of the exchange is to *facilitate continuity of care for a patient*;

(8) That a *patient's family member* who is involved in the provision, planning, and monitoring of services to the patient may receive medication information, a summary of the patient's diagnosis and prognosis, and a list of the services and personnel available to assist the patient and the patient's family, if the patient's treating physician determines that the disclosure would be in the best interests of the patient. No such disclosure shall be made unless the patient is notified first and receives the information and does not object to the disclosure.

(9) That community mental health agencies may exchange psychiatric records and certain other information with the board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services and other agencies in order to provide services to a person involuntarily committed to a board. Release of records under this division shall be limited to medication history, physical health status and history, financial status, summary of course of treatment, summary of treatment needs, and discharge summary, if any.

(10) That information may be disclosed to the executor or the administrator of an estate of a deceased patient when the information is necessary to administer the estate;

(11) That records in the possession of the Ohio historical society may be released to the closest living relative of a deceased patient upon request of that relative;

(12) That information may be disclosed to staff members of the appropriate board or to staff members designated by the director of mental health for the purpose of evaluating the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of services and determining if the services meet minimum standards. Information obtained during such evaluations shall not be retained with the name of any patient.

(13) That records pertaining to the patient's diagnosis, course of treatment, treatment needs, and prognosis shall be disclosed and released to the appropriate prosecuting attorney if the patient was committed pursuant to section [2945.38](#), [2945.39](#), [2945.40](#), [2945.401](#), or [2945.402](#) of the Revised Code, or to the attorney designated by the board for proceedings pursuant to involuntary commitment under this chapter.

(14) That the department of mental health may exchange psychiatric hospitalization records, other mental health treatment records, and other pertinent information with the department of rehabilitation and correction to ensure continuity of care for inmates who are receiving mental health services in an institution of the department of rehabilitation and correction. The department shall not disclose those records unless the inmate is notified, receives the information, and does not object to the disclosure. The release of records under this division is limited to records regarding an inmate's medication history, physical health status and history, summary of course of treatment, summary of treatment needs, and a discharge summary, if any.

(15) That a community mental health agency that ceases to operate may transfer to either a community mental health agency that assumes its caseload or to the board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services of the service district in which the patient resided at the time services were most recently provided any treatment records that have not been transferred elsewhere at the patient's request.

(B) Before records are disclosed pursuant to divisions (A)(3), (6), (7), and (9) of this section, the custodian of the records shall attempt to obtain the patient's consent for the disclosure. No person shall reveal the contents of a medical record of a patient except as authorized by law.

(C) The managing officer of a hospital who releases necessary medical information under division (A)(3) of this section to allow an insurance carrier or other third party payor to comply with section [5121.43](#) of the Revised Code shall neither be subject to criminal nor civil liability.