

1. What is 72 hour assessment?

The Mental Health Care Act, 2002 (No. 17 of 2002) prescribes that before a mental health user is committed to a facility designated to render specialised mental health services, an assessment be done on the user to confirm whether there is a need indeed that involuntary care, treatment & rehabilitation be continued and whether on in- or out-patient basis. The assessment must be done over 72 hours and is called a 72 hour assessment.

2. Where is the 72 hour assessment conducted?

Under the provisions of the Act, 2002, some of the hospitals in the Free State have been listed to offer this service. Hospitals that are not listed at the moment will refer the client to the closest hospital that renders this service.

Hospitals listed to offer this service are:

Fezile Dabi District:

Boitumelo, Mafube, Metsimaholo, Parys and Tokollo.

Lejweleputswa District:

Bongani, Katileho, Mohau, Nala, Thusanong and Winburg.

Motheo District:

Botshabelo, Dr. J.S. Moroka and Pelonomi.

Thabo Mofutsanyane District:

Elizabeth Ross, Phekolong, Phutholoha and Thebe.

Xhariep District:

Diamond and Stoffel Coetzee.

Designated facilities:

Free State Psychiatric Complex and Mofumahadi Manapo Mopeli also render this service.

3. How is the assessment conducted?

Since the user for 72 hour assessment will be a person who is ill and lacks insight into his or her illness, an applicant (spouse, next of kin, partner, associate, parent, guardian and in their absence, incapability or unwillingness a health worker) must submit to the CEO (or representative) an application on form MHCA 04 under oath at SAPS or admitting hospital for involuntary care. The Act, 2002 (sec 40) stipulates that SAPS members are to assist in taking the user to and handing the user over at a nearby listed facility/hospital.

The CEO (or appointed representative) will have two mental health practitioners examine the user and both to recommend either in agreement with, an alternative to or against the application for involuntary care. The alternative to the application may be provision of assisted instead of involuntary care. If the two do not agree, a third practitioner will be called in to make a final recommendation.

When the CEO (or appointed representative) approves on form MHCA 07 that the user be admitted for involuntary care, the user is admitted and the health



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professionals will render all the necessary care treatment and rehabilitation required. A doctor and another mental health practitioner also need to assess whether this involuntary care should be continued and whether on an in- or out-patient basis.

4. During the 72 hour assessment

During this period, the user is treated according to the required care, e.g. should the user recover, care is stopped or should the user need stricter conditions not available at that hospital, the user is transferred to suitable conditions, if psychiatric medication is required, it is prescribed and administered. The user is treated comprehensively where all physical, emotional, social and mental needs are met like they would have been for any other patient in accordance with the policies and practices of that hospital. The doctor treating the user has to report to the CEO (or representative) every 24 hours the mental status of the user.

5. At the end of the assessment within 12 Hours after 72 Hours assessment

The doctor and another practitioner will communicate their findings i.e. whether involuntary care is to be continued or not, to the CEO (or representative) who will then inform the various stakeholders. All the forms completed during this process are submitted (within 7 days) to the Mental Health Review Board for review. – Irrespective of the outcome, even if user is discharged.



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