

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE  
Inter-Office Communication

**DATE:** January 11, 2011

**TO:** Supervisor Michael Mayo, Chairman - Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Geri Lyday, Interim Director, Department of Health and Human Services

**SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT FROM THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES REGARDING A FOLLOW-UP REPORT REGARDING MIXED-GENDER PATIENT CARE UNITS AT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION**

**Issue**

On April 14, 2010, the department received a referral from Supervisor Peggy West, Chairperson for the Health & Human Needs Committee, requesting a report from the Behavioral Health Division (BHD) on mixed-gender units for the acute psychiatric inpatient unit. The BHD Administrator assigned medical staff the responsibility to conduct a study and literature review, consistent with Joint Commission expectation that the medical staff have a leadership role in enhancing the quality of care, treatment and service, and patient safety.

On June 16, 2010, a preliminary report from the BHD Gender Unit Work Group was presented to the committee. The conclusion was that the mixed-gender acute inpatient units utilized by BHD are the norm among public psychiatric hospital systems in Wisconsin and have been the standard model for inpatient psychiatric treatment for decades. Any revision to the existing practice at BHD of mixed-gender units must look carefully at implications for safety, patient satisfaction and choice and therapeutic benefit. For these reasons, the Gender Unit Work Group recommended that BHD do a detailed study to more thoroughly evaluate the various options to ensure a safe inpatient unit environment. The work group presented an update to the committee in September and is now returning with a follow-up report that specifically addresses the current practice of mixed-gender units at BHD.

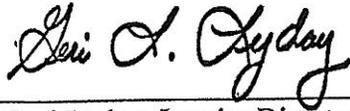
**Discussion**

The follow-up report from the BHD medical staff makes several recommendations important to the discussion of mixed-gender units. Specifically, the Gender Unit Work Group recommends a configuration of the four Acute Adult Inpatient units that would create a 12-bed Intensive Treatment Unit (ITU) that is expected to be predominantly male; a combined Women's-Option/Med-Psych Treatment Unit; and two mixed-gender General Treatment Units. More information about these recommended units, the rationale, and supporting documentation is included in the attached *Milwaukee County BHD follow-up report to the BHD Administrator: Mixed-Gender Units*, submitted by the Gender Unit Work Group.

**Recommendation**

This is an informational report. No action is necessary.

Respectfully submitted:



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Gerri Lyday, Interim Director  
Department of Health & Human Services

Attachment

cc: County Executive Lee Holloway  
Renee Booker, Director – DAS  
Allison Rozek, Analyst – DAS  
Jennifer Collins, Analyst – County Board  
Jodi Mapp, Committee Clerk – County Board