

HAMILTON CENTER, INC.  
OPERATIONS MANUAL

Section: **ACCESS**

Policy No.: OP.14.04.00.00

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Policy: **ACCESS STANDARDS**

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## PURPOSE

To assure timely and appropriate access to services.

## POLICY

Hamilton Center, Inc.'s (HCI) goal is to provide access to services based on individual needs and admission criteria. Programs and services are provided within the financial limits and capacity of the organization; waiting lists for services may be utilized. The Continuous Quality Improvement/Managed Care Department tracks and monitors service access performance based on organization-wide averages to insure compliance with third party payors.

## POLICY COMPONENTS

- A. HCI's goal is to schedule appointments or see consumers in accordance with the timelines prescribed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and as adopted by all payors. Consumers are informed of each location's walk in hours when calling Central Scheduling a first available appointment will be offered.
1. For life threatening emergencies, consumers are asked to come to an HCI location for immediate crisis assessment or when indicated, referred to the closest emergency room for assessment/treatment. HCI provides a 24-hour crisis toll free telephone number for emergency treatment or referrals as appropriate.
  2. Non-life threatening (not suicidal or homicidal) emergency appointments are offered within six (6) hours or directed to an HCI service location for crisis assessment or the nearest hospital for evaluation.
  3. Urgent appointments for individuals whose functioning level has declined and require attention in a short time frame are scheduled within 48 hours or directed to an HCI service location for crisis assessment or the nearest hospital for evaluation.
  4. An appointment for an initial routine office visit is offered within ten (10) business days based on availability of paneled/covered providers or advised by Central Scheduling of the times and locations of walk in intake appointments for the consumer's preferred location.

5. For individuals who are current HCI outpatient clients before a hospitalization, an outpatient behavioral health office visit is offered within seven (7) calendar days after the individual's inpatient stay.
  6. Employment services through Employment Solutions' programs are provided within seven (7) days of authorization and funding approval.
  7. Services provided through grants and specific contracts are initiated and provided according to the guidelines specified in the contract or grant agreement, including telehealth crisis assessment services.
- B. In compliance with Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addictions special conditions for chronically addicted pregnant women and/or intravenous (IV) drug users, an assessment is offered within fourteen (14) days or the person is referred to another service site for assessment and treatment according to the Pregnant Women and Intravenous Drug Users procedure. Walk-in assessment hours are also available.
- C. Outpatient services do not maintain waiting lists.
- D. HCI residential homes and Sub-acute maintain on-going waiting lists for appropriate housing. Admission to a 24-hour group home or Sub-acute is determined by admission criteria, openings at the location, acuity level and specific needs of the consumer, physician advice, and gender.
- E. Admissions to HCI's inpatient unit are based on admission criteria, available beds, acuity level, and physician order. When an HCI bed is not available, HCI's Access services will locate and arrange for an available bed. HCI referrals who were admitted to another hospital are monitored for transfer back to HCI as appropriate.