

**HAMILTON CENTER, INC.
OPERATIONS MANUAL**

Section:	CONSUMER & FAMILY	Policy No.:	OP.09.11.00.00
Policy:	CONSUMER ADVOCATES	Date Originated:	12/98
		Last R/R Date:	10/18
		BOD Approval:	02/99
		Posted:	11/18

PURPOSE

To assist individuals served in obtaining a personal advocate and to avoid impropriety in Hamilton Center, Inc. (HCI) employees acting as an advocate for a service recipient.

POLICY

Consumers who express a desire to obtain a personal advocate are assisted in linking with appropriate services/agencies capable of providing advocacy services. HCI staff may not serve as a personal advocate for an individual receiving services at HCI unless an exception is granted by the Chief Executive Officer.

POLICY COMPONENTS

- A. With the consent of the consumer, service providers may arrange and assist a member of the individual's family, a person who is part of that consumer's natural support system and/or another person to become an advocate for the individual.
- B. Advocates are encouraged to support the individual in the care planning processes and other areas that are a concern or interest to the consumer. If the consumer has a legal guardian, he/she may also have a personal advocate if desired. The legal guardian however has the responsibility for decision making and signing any documents that require a guardian's signature.
- C. Any HCI service provider can assist the consumer in obtaining an advocate by contacting the local Mental Health of America offices, local ARCs, Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services, Key Health Consumer groups, the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addictions, the Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitation Services, a Medicaid Waiver case manager, a school system and/or the Department of Child services. Children under the age of 18 may also be referred to the local juvenile court system and/or Surrogate Parents if appropriate to his/her circumstances.
- D. Requests for exceptions to this policy are made by completing a conflict of interest form. An employee may not serve as a personal advocate for an HCI consumer until the request is approved in advance by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Employees approved to act as a personal advocate must use Paid Time Off when executing personal advocate duties during scheduled work hours.