

**MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF ORANGE COUNTY
JOB DESCRIPTION**

TITLE: PATIENTS RIGHTS ADVOCATE

SUMMARY:

Under the direction of the Patients' Rights Supervisor, the Patients' Rights Advocate is responsible for providing support and advocacy to mental health patients during their hearings.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

This position reports to the Patients' Rights Supervisor

STATUS: Full-time or Part-time, Non-Exempt

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Essential:

1. Conduct interviews with involuntary patients who have been certified to:
 - help each patient understand the certification review process and the reasons given as to why he/she has been certified
 - assist the patient in obtaining the presence of any other person(s) he/she may wish to have at his/her hearing.
 - explore with the patient any feasible alternatives to his/her continued involuntary hospitalization
 - ascertain whether the patient wishes the Hearing Representative to assist or represent him/her at the hearing.
2. Arrange for an interpreter, if needed.
3. Perform any other pre-hearing investigation which appears warranted, including review of the patient's charts and other relevant documents.
4. Attend Certification review and/or capacity hearings, providing whatever level of assistance or representation each patient has requested.
5. Maintain accurate and organized case records for patients who have Certification review or capacity hearings or whose complaints regarding patients' rights violations have been investigated.
6. Work efficiently and effectively with patients, Hearing Officers, and mental health facility staff members to provide high-quality advocacy for patients under certification.

Secondary:

1. Perform other duties as assigned by Assistant Coordinator and/or Program Director.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

(Note: relevant experience gained working in a volunteer capacity will be considered in assessing an applicant's qualifications.)

1. One year of experience in mental health or related social services or 6 months of experience delivering advocacy services to people with mental illness.
2. Demonstrated ability to work effectively and responsibly away from the Program's main office and with minimal direct supervision.

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3. Ability to work effectively and appropriately within the mental health and other service systems.
4. Must demonstrate respect and compassion for patients and act to support patient's ability to be self-determining.
5. Personal stability and an ability to work well under pressure.
6. Ability to work professionally and effectively with people with mental illness.
7. Ability to assist persons in presenting their cases in an administrative law hearing or similar type of hearing.
8. Ability to quickly ascertain what are relevant facts in a given situation and to efficiently conduct informal investigations.
9. Must have a motor vehicle available for daily use; possess a valid California Drivers License, carry auto liability insurance as required by law, and have an acceptable motor vehicle report, as determined by our insurance broker. **(Position requires extensive local travel up to 600 miles per month).**

ADDITIONAL DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Prior work as a Patients' Rights Advocate and/or Certification Review Hearing Representative.
2. Knowledge of California mental health law and especially of provisions governing involuntary treatment. (California Welfare and Institutions Code)
3. Experience in representing clients at non-judicial hearings (e.g. Social Security Disability Appeals hearings).
4. Certificate of Training; Patients' Rights Advocacy, by State Department of Mental Health.
5. Familiarity with the mental health service system in Orange County.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

1. Sit: Stationary position at least 50% of the time.
2. Move: Frequently move about the inside of the office to access file cabinets, office machinery, etc.
3. Operate: Ability to operate a computer and other office productivity machines, such as a calculator, copy machine, and computer printer. Must have the physical dexterity to be able to type at minimum 35 WPM.
4. Communicate: Communicates daily with Consumers, staff and outside resources that have inquires; must be able to exchange accurate information in these situations.
5. Ability to lift up to 20 pounds.
6. Occasionally transport clients in personal and MHA vehicle.

Please note that this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Duties, responsibilities and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

The Mental Health Association of Orange County is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage all qualified individuals to apply for open positions regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or any other legally protected status.