

SAN MATEO COUNTY
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION

DATE: 10/17/01

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY NO.: MH 01-07

SUBJECT: Facsimile (FAX) Confidentiality

AUTHORITY: Federal, State and Local Confidentiality Regulations

SUPERSEDES: New Policy

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines to protect the confidentiality of information transmitted by facsimile (FAX) machines.

POLICY

This policy applies to all San Mateo County Mental Health Services' providers.

- I. All transmittals that contain client identifiers, sent from FAX machines located within Mental Health Services' provider sites, must include a cover sheet with the following confidentiality statement:

The information contained in this FAX transmission is confidential and may be privileged and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. This information is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, or the agent or the employee responsible to deliver it to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any use, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received the FAX transmission in error, please immediately notify us by telephone and return the original message by mail to the address below (return postage available upon request). Thank you.

- II. It is the sender's responsibility to verify that the correct FAX number has been entered before transmitting any information. Best practice is to enter the entire seven-digit local number, rather than the county four-digit number. Whenever possible, locations receiving regular FAX transmissions should be entered into speed dialing options (verify before initial use).
- III. Clients should not be identified on the cover page.

- IV. FAX machines shall not be installed in areas where the public, including clients, may see or have access to material that has been sent or received.
- V. All material with client identifiers must be shredded when no longer needed.

Approved: _____
Gale Bataille, Director
Mental Health Services Division

Attachment: Sample Cover Sheet