

# LANDLORD COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

Dauphin County MH/MR and our Service Providers are committed to establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with landlords and property managers who rent to mental health consumers in Dauphin County. We are also aware that mental health consumers possess varying degrees of independent living skills, and that consumers require individually tailored services and supports to assist them in maintaining viable and successful independent community living arrangements. In November of 2002, the Dauphin County MH/MR Program and our mental health service providers began a project to formalize our approach to delivering in-home services and interventions. This change in focus requires more communication with the larger community, and especially landlords. We also recognize that our mental health service delivery system is complex, and that it is especially difficult for members of our community who have had little contact or familiarity with our system to understand the complexity.

*This document serves to provide landlords with a simplified guide to assist them with obtaining assistance and interventions from our mental health system when landlords believe a mental health intervention is required.*

We have targeted a number of programs and staff to work directly with consumers around housing and independent living issues. As an example, we have more than 50 different providers of community based mental health services who deliver about 20 distinctly different types of services to more than 3,000 adult mental health consumers in the public mental health system in Dauphin County. Adding to that complexity is that some persons with mental illness in our community have no connection to our publicly funded community based mental health system, but they may receive mental health services through private insurance or without affiliation to any of our Dauphin County MH/MR contracted service providers. Another complicating factor is that mental health treatment is, by law, a confidential matter between consumers and professionals unless the consumer agrees to share treatment information with other people.

However, we wish to stress that first and foremost, the confidentiality regulations under which we operate never prohibits a landlord from expressing a concern to service providers about a person whom the landlord believes is in need of an intervention as a result of mental illness. Confidentiality regulations may prevent a full exchange of information from professionals to landlords regarding the specific nature of a consumer's treatment and services, but they do not preclude a landlord from identifying the person and the nature of the behavior that the landlord believes requires a mental health service intervention.

Secondly, it is the ongoing objective of our providers to promote appropriate communication and collaboration with landlords by being involved with consumers on a one to one basis by assisting consumers in finding and keeping

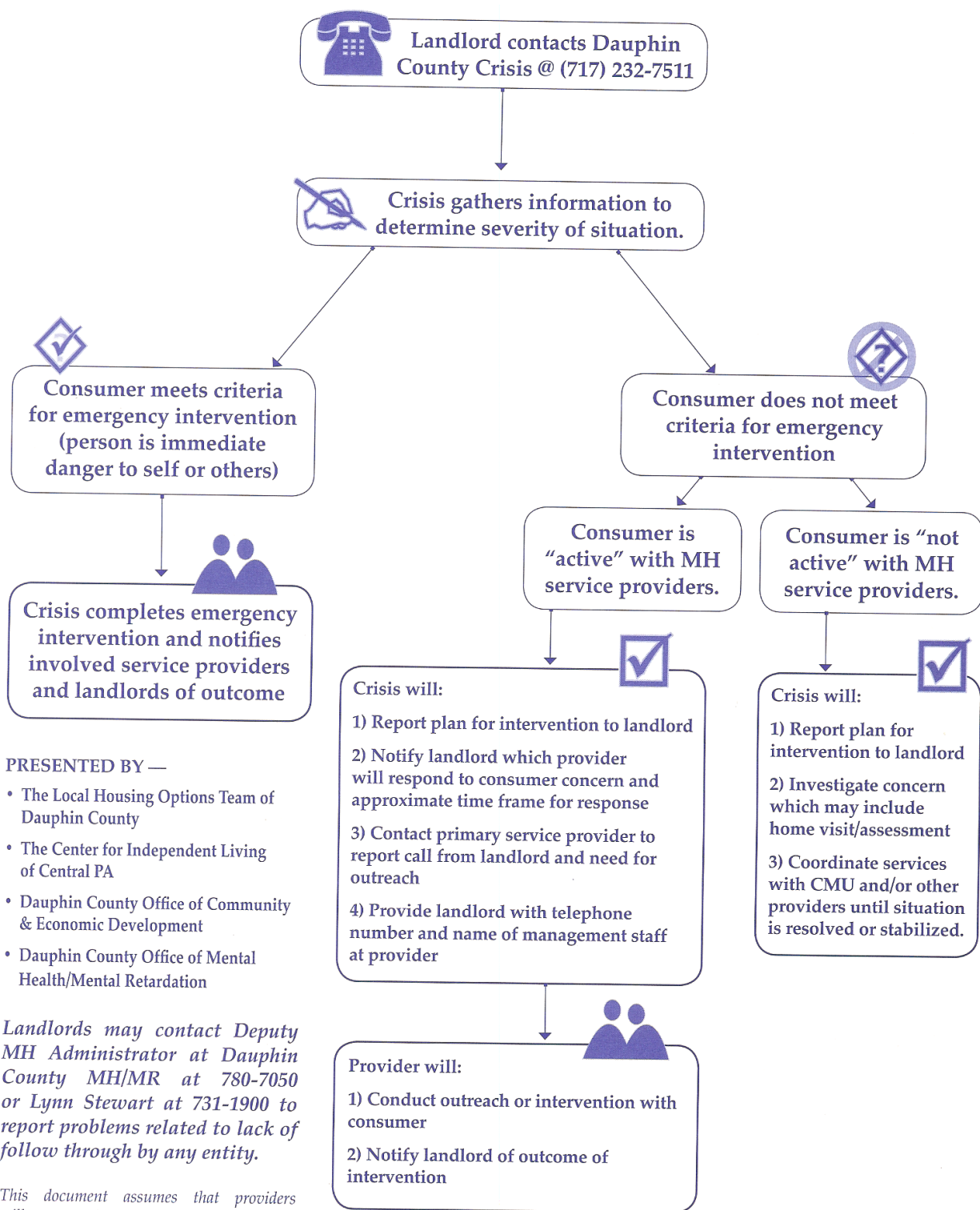
independent living arrangements in apartment settings, and by promoting and developing relationships between mental health workers and landlords that assure that landlords and property managers are aware of who should be contacted in the event of a problem or concern for people receiving our services. Staff are encouraged to provide contact information to landlords at the time of lease arrangements or other suitable occasions.

We are also aware that our system has a degree of staff turnover and that information provided to landlords at the time of lease arrangements may become outdated. And so while we believe the primary and most effective option landlords should use to obtain mental health interventions is by direct contact with involved staff, we also know this is not always possible. We are therefore providing the attached diagram that demonstrates how landlords not sure who to call can access assistance with our service system by a single call to a single entity, Dauphin County Crisis Intervention.

Landlords must also understand that the Dauphin County Crisis Program may not be the agency that ultimately responds to a given situation, particularly in non-emergency situations. However Crisis staff will be responsible to contact the appropriate provider on behalf of the landlord in order to facilitate an appropriate response to the situation, and Crisis will also inform the landlord which agency the landlord can expect to respond to a particular situation. Please refer to the attached flow chart for a description of what landlords can expect when contacting the Dauphin County Crisis Intervention Program.

May 7, 2004

## Dauphin County Mental Health System Landlord Communication Flowchart



**PRESENTED BY —**

- The Local Housing Options Team of Dauphin County
- The Center for Independent Living of Central PA
- Dauphin County Office of Community & Economic Development
- Dauphin County Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation

*Landlords may contact Deputy MH Administrator at Dauphin County MH/MR at 780-7050 or Lynn Stewart at 731-1900 to report problems related to lack of follow through by any entity.*

*This document assumes that providers will communicate within the bounds of confidentiality regulations, and also that providers engage consumers and landlords in ability to exchange appropriate information.*