

Crisis & Emergency Response Policy

Sunflower Mountain Mental Health (SMMH)

Effective Date: January 1, 2025

Purpose

This policy clarifies Sunflower Mountain Mental Health's (SMMH) role in **crisis response**, ensuring patients and staff understand the scope of available services while complying with **Medicare, Medicaid, and behavioral health best practices**. SMMH does not provide emergency services unless required by federal or state regulations but offers guidance and crisis resource referrals.

SMMH's Role in Crisis Situations

- SMMH is an **outpatient mental health practice** and does **not** operate as a crisis center or emergency facility.
- SMMH **does not provide 24/7 crisis intervention or emergency psychiatric care**.
- If a patient experiences a psychiatric or medical emergency, they should **immediately call 911** or go to the nearest emergency room.
- Providers may conduct **risk assessments** during scheduled appointments and provide **crisis resource referrals** as appropriate.

Crisis Referral & Resource Information

If a patient is in distress but **not in immediate danger**, SMMH provides the following crisis resources:

- **Colorado Crisis Services:** Call **844-493-8255** or text **TALK to 38255**.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Call **988**.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text **HOME to 741741**.
- **The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ Youth Crisis Support):** Call **1-866-488-7386** or text **START to 678-678**.
- **Local Emergency Departments** for in-person psychiatric evaluation and stabilization.

Managing Crisis Situations During Appointments

If a patient exhibits signs of crisis during an SMMH session:

- The provider will conduct a **clinical assessment** to determine risk level.

- If the patient expresses **suicidal or homicidal intent with a plan**, SMMH must follow state-mandated reporting and intervention protocols.
- If the patient requires **immediate crisis intervention**, the provider may:
 - **Contact emergency services (911).**
 - **Initiate an emergency psychiatric evaluation** at the nearest hospital.
 - **Call crisis intervention services on the patient's behalf.**

Telehealth Crisis Response Protocol

For telehealth appointments where a crisis arises:

- Providers must confirm **the patient's physical location at the start of the session.**
- If a crisis occurs, providers will:
 - Attempt to **de-escalate the situation** using crisis intervention techniques.
 - If escalation continues, contact **local crisis services or 911 while remaining connected to the telehealth appointment.**
 - If the patient **disconnects before safety is established**, providers must **attempt to reach the patient** and **notify emergency personnel (911) and emergency contacts if necessary.**

Emergency Reporting Requirements

- If an SMMH provider determines a patient is at risk of **immediate harm**, a **duty to warn** may apply under Colorado state law.
- In cases of **child abuse, elder abuse, or threats of violence**, providers must report to the appropriate state agencies.

Limitations & Liability

- SMMH is not responsible for **emergency crisis stabilization** or medical interventions.
- Patients are informed upon intake that **SMMH does not provide emergency services.**
- By signing SMMH intake documents, patients acknowledge that **they must seek emergency help if needed.**

Discharge & Transition for Higher Levels of Care

SMMH is an **outpatient mental health practice** and does not offer **inpatient or emergency psychiatric services**. If a provider determines that a patient requires a **higher level of care** (such as inpatient hospitalization, partial hospitalization, intensive outpatient treatment, or emergency stabilization), they may initiate **discharge and transition planning** in accordance with the **Discharge/Termination from Practice and Communication Policy**.

Compliance & Monitoring

- Providers receive **annual training** on crisis intervention procedures.
- Crisis response protocols are **reviewed and updated** as needed.
- SMMH maintains **documentation of crisis referrals** for compliance and quality assurance.

***Last Updated:** March 2025*

For further assistance, please contact SMMH at **(719) 679-5022** or visit www.sunflowermountainmentalhealth.com.