

Some Of The Ways An Advocate Can Help You:

- Understanding Recovery
- Peer Support Information
- Community Support Program
- Mental Health Advance Directives

EXTERNAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM

What is an External Advocate?

An external advocate is an independent advocate – not employed by the state – who provides assistance to individuals receiving services at the state run facilities.

An Advocate Can:

- Help individuals and their families with questions, concerns, and complaints regarding hospital care and treatment.
- Help resolve concerns and complaints.
- Work with individuals and others, including local/regional mental health offices and county providers, to facilitate community living.
- Refer individuals to an attorney or agency which provides legal advocacy.
- Assist with questions about benefit programs and concerns regarding employment.
- Provide technical assistance and education regarding rights to individuals, their families and the hospital staff.
- Ensure the fundamental rights of the individual receiving services in the state operated facility.

The services provided by External Advocates are free of discrimination and supportive of all cultures, races, ethnic groups, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, and persons with disabilities.

Your Rights

The facility must give you a detailed list of your rights when you come into the facility. The external advocate can help you understand your rights which include **your civil rights, your right to be** treated with dignity and respect and rights related to:

- Overall treatment and care
- Mental health advance directive
- Freedom of movement
- Discharge
- Refusing medication
- Private and unrestricted communication
- Practice of religion or faith of your choice
- The handling of your personal affairs and possessions
- Payment for any work you do which benefits the operation and maintenance of the facility

If you have questions about the External Advocate Program, contact the Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania, 1-866-578-3659 (toll-free), externaladvocacy@mhapa.org.