



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities
and Substance Abuse Services

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Willie M. Section

ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. 96-03

TO: Area MH/DD/SA Program Directors
Willie M. Coordinators

FROM: Marci White, Chief
Willie M. Section

DATE: July 18, 1996

RE: POLICY REGARDING USE OF THE NEW **Willie M.** APPLICATION/NOMINATION FORM AND ACCOMPANYING SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Administrative Letter is to outline the policy for making application/nominations for eligibility/class membership in the **Willie M.** program and to outline procedures for submitting nominations ("on-line" and "hard copy"). In addition, this letter outlines supporting documentation requirements for Carolina Alternatives sites and other programs.

POLICY

With the introduction of the **Willie M.** Information System (WMIS), area MH/DD/SAS programs now have the capacity to initiate the application/nomination process "on-line" (detailed procedure description included with this letter). We have also reproduced the form in hard copy for those area programs who are not yet "on-line" as well as for those other agencies or individuals who will not be "on-line" but who wish to make application/nomination.

Beginning immediately, we are requesting that all nominations be submitted "on-line" or in hard copy on this form. Area programs connected to the system should initiate the

process through the WMIS as described in the attached procedures. After September 1, 1996, nominations/applications received on older forms will be considered "incomplete" and processing may be delayed as Section staff work with the submitting person(s) to gather the data necessary to complete the application. A copy (or copies) of the new application/nomination form is (are) enclosed. Please see to it that copies of the form and enclosed procedures for "hard copy" preparation are distributed to all those you know who regularly make or consider making application on behalf of children, particularly those individuals and/or agencies not directly receiving a copy of this letter (see cc: list at end of letter). Additional copies of the nomination form may be obtained through the Client Eligibility and Information Branch of the **Willie M.** Section Office in Raleigh. Any computer generated versions of the form completed by area programs or other agencies, must conform to the formatting and page layout of the "hard copy" enclosed, exclusive of the narrative section (which may be expanded to create more space).

As always, anyone can make application for a child to be considered for **Willie M.** services. Nominations/applications by those other than area programs may be submitted directly to the area MH/DD/SA program in the child's legal county of residence or directly to the **Willie M.** Section in Raleigh with a copy to the area program. However, given the new automated capability available to the area programs through the WMIS, we continue to encourage coordination of the nomination process through the area programs whenever possible, since their "on-line" capability will greatly enhance and accelerate the process of application and decision notification.

Attached to the new nomination form (both "on-line" and hard copy) is a more detailed set of instructions for its completion, particularly for the supporting documentation that is necessary for determination of eligibility. The new instructions spell out in more detail the kinds of supporting documentation needed to accompany the nomination form. Given the complexity of cases and the number of questions which arise about behavior, needs, services, etc., during application review, submission of supporting documentation with the application will reduce the amount of time for determination by avoiding the time and effort it takes to request and await additional information. While there is no guarantee that questions will not arise, by anticipating those that will likely be asked, the person submitting the application can accelerate the process. The instructions address the type of data that typically needs to be documented. (For additional suggestions, review other documents provided previously by the Section on this topic).

Consistent with the nomination process to date, a signed consent form is required before a final eligibility determination can be made. This consent should accompany the hard copy of the application/nomination (or narrative portion) forwarded to the Section office. At this time, the current consent form entitled "Consent for Release of Information and Authorization for Comprehensive Evaluation" will continue to be used.

We will be working to revise this form for the future, as needed.

As you are aware, we are in the process of attempting to move out from under federal court oversight of the **Willie M.** lawsuit. Legislation was enacted in June 1995 defining "Eligible Assaultive and Violent Children" (1995 Session Chapter 249, SB775) and allowing for rules to be developed governing eligibility and to "ensure the provision of services" for these children. These rules are currently being and reviewed. If needed, a more deprive set of Procedures will be developed and distributed and the "Criteria for Certification" updated to reflect new terminology, etc. The overall system will remain the same in terms of the criteria and description of the children we serve. The most significant changes are reflected in the new terminology describing the program and its processes such as "application" vs. "nomination," "eligibility" vs. "certification," etc.; and in the establishment of a formal appeals process for resolving disputes about eligibility determinations.

With the new WMIS, along with the changes underway with regards to the federal court, we continue to operate in an period of transition. While we are now collecting and maintaining more data on the children we serve and have the capability to access that data more quickly, we also are experiencing the stretching of both our imaginations and workload capacities. The rewards are not always readily apparent but with all that we now have or will soon have available, we should see the benefits in increased productivity for ourselves and our staffs, and in the outcomes for our clients. The enthusiasm and support that has been generated by so many of you during this process is much appreciated by myself and the rest of the Section staff. We thank you in advance for helping disseminate the information about the nomination process as well as supporting those who come to you requesting information and assistance for children whom they believe may meet the criteria for eligibility and are in need of the services available through **Willie M.**

If you need additional copies of the new nomination form, additional copies of the current consent or have any questions about the process or documentation, please contact the Client Eligibility Branch at the Section office in Raleigh. Because of the increasing emphasis on the process for date g eligibility, the Section has recently re-organized to establish this branch which is responsible for all aspects of the determination process. Ann Baldwin, whom many of you know, continues in her capacity as Certification Specialist. Joan Kramer, previously our Program Development Specialist, has joined the branch as its Branch Head and we have recently welcomed Terri Oakley as our new Branch Secretary. Please feel free to contact any of these people to assist you if you need more forms, information, etc. at: (919) 571-4900.

cc: Michael Pedneau
Lowell Harris
Bill Hussey & DPI **Willie M.** regional staff
Director, Exceptional Children Programs
Willie M. Interagency Committee
Gwenn Chunn
DYS Training School and Detention Center Directors
State psychiatric hospital child unit directors
Administrative Office of the Courts, Juvenile Services Division
Chief Juvenile Court Counselors
Guardian ad Litem Division
District Administrators, Guardian ad Litem Program
Kevin Fitzgerald
County DSS directors
Governor's Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities

BASIC PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING AN "ON-LINE" APPLICATION

1. Get the release/consent form ("Consent for Release of Information and Authorization for Comprehensive Evaluation") signed as early as possible in the process so that data can be entered completely. The Consent is essential for making a final determination.
2. When entering information "on line," please refer to the instructions on the screens and user training manuals for specific instructions about data entry and use of the various function keys. The enclosed instructions are provided as an overview and to assist with common data entry questions.
3. Enter the required data into each of the six sets of screens (Identifying, Agency, Clinical, Behavioral, Legal and Educational) in the Client Information System portion of the WMIS and press the function key to add the client to the database. Completing the entire set of screens can be done over time or all at one sitting. However, the system will not save the client in the database without the child's last initial, first name and date of birth. (The full last name will not be added to the database even if typed in, unless both Y [Yes] is entered in the field for consent and the date of consent is entered.)
 - **Behavioral Data Note:**
If Y [Yes] is selected for any question, then a frequency and a date of last occurrence must be entered.

Special Note: The questions "Seriously threatened to hurt someone" either "using" or "NOT using a weapon" should be interpreted to include any type of threatening behavior or gesture, including fighting or other aggressive behaviors, etc. where the other person's safety is perceived as threatened but actual harm hasn't occurred. If actual physical harm has occurred, that is addressed in the first two behavior questions.
4. After completing all data entry in the six sets of screens, return to the first screen (Identifying Information). If you have completed the narrative information which must accompany the nomination/application, have compiled the other needed accompanying documentation and are ready to "forward" the application to the **Willie M.** Section office, enter the application date and add/save the completed file again to the database.

5. In completing the remaining narrative portions of the Application (questions 35-37), you may use either the generated form or the narrative pages of a “hard copy” form (if preferred). Be sure to document in detail each behavior for which you indicated a Yes response. Additional “Behavioral Narrative” continuation pages are available if needed.
6. Generate a printed nomination form for the specific child by pressing the appropriate function key.
7. Go to the Maintain Activity Function and enter activity code 900 which automatically changes the child's status to that of an applicant (Status Code 200). Be sure to date and sign any memo entered for this activity. (Although the activity has a date, currently this does not carry over to the memo field. It is also important to enter your name so it is clear who recorded the memo.)
8. Forward the hard copy, including the required narrative information, with the signed consent and all supporting information/documentation to the **Willie M.** Section Office address listed on the instructions, attention: Client Eligibility and Information Branch.

BASIC PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING A “HARD COPY APPLICATION”

(for area programs not yet “on-line” as well as for those agencies or individuals who will not be “on-line”)

1. Obtain an “Application for **Willie M.** Class Membership.”
2. Get the release/consent form (“Consent for Release of Information and Authorization for Comprehensive Evaluation”) signed as early as possible in the process. The Consent is essential for making a final determination.
3. Complete the application form in detail following the directions and instructions attached. It may be legibly printed, handwritten or typewritten. Note: All data on the form is required before an application can be considered and a determination made. Incomplete applications will be held until the area program and/or the person submitting it can be contacted and the necessary information obtained.

4. **Behavioral Data Note:**

If Y [Yes] is selected for any question, then a frequency and a date of last occurrence must be entered.

Special Note: The questions “Seriously threatened to hurt someone” either “using” or “NOT using a weapon” should be interpreted to include any type of threatening behavior or gesture, including fighting or other aggressive behaviors, etc. where the other person's safety is perceived as threatened but actual harm hasn't occurred. If actual physical harm has occurred, that is addressed in the first two behavior questions.

5. Forward the hard copy, including the narrative information, along with the signed consent and all supporting information/documentation.
 - Area Programs: Forward to the **Willie M.** Section Office address listed on the instructions, attention: Client Eligibility and Information Branch.
 - All others: Forward to the **Willie M.** Coordinator of the Area MH/DD/SAS programs for the county of the child's legal residence. (If uncertain, or if questions or difficulties arise, contact the **Willie M.** Section Office in Raleigh, 919-571-4900, and ask for the Client Eligibility and Information Branch).