



March 12, 2025

Psychiatric Care of Inmates

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reference Number: CTAS-1381

The Eighth Amendment requirement of adequate medical care for a prisoner applies equally to psychiatric care. *McCullough v. Barnes*, 2005 WL 2704878, *8 (M.D. Tenn. 2005), citing *Torraco v. Maloney*, 923 F.2d 231, 234 (1st Cir. 1991); *Bowring v. Godwin*, 551 F.2d 44, 47 (4th Cir. 1977).

Inmates shall have access to mental health services as clinically warranted in accordance with protocols established by the health authority that include:

- (a) Screening for mental health problems;
- (b) Referral to outpatient services, including psychiatric care;
- (c) Crisis intervention and management of acute psychiatric episodes;
- (d) Stabilization of the mentally ill and prevention of psychiatric deterioration in the facility;
- (e) Referral and admission to inpatient facilities; and
- (f) Informed consent for treatment. Rules of the Tennessee Corrections Institute, Rule 1400-1-.13(12).

A suicide prevention program shall be approved by the health authority and reviewed by the facility administrator. The program must include specific procedures for handling intake, screening, identifying, and continually supervising the suicide-prone inmate. All facility employees responsible for supervising suicide-prone inmates shall be trained annually on program expectations. Rules of the Tennessee Corrections Institute, Rule 1400-1-.13(13) and (14).

Involuntary administration of psychotropic medication(s) to inmates shall be authorized by a physician and provided in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the health authority, and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations of the jurisdiction. Rules of the Tennessee Corrections Institute, Rule 1400-1-.13(23).

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