



A Division of the New York Legal Assistance Group

**LegalHealth**  
Professional Partnership to Promote Well Being<sup>®</sup>

*This is general information, not legal advice. Patients should consult an attorney for specific guidance.*

## Hospital to Shelter Discharges

Department of Homeless Services (DHS) has issued new protocols and forms for discharge of hospital inpatients to shelter effective July 1, 2018.

### What has changed under this new procedure?

- Handwritten forms will no longer be accepted.
- All forms must be emailed to appropriate office; faxes will no longer be accepted.
- DHS has set up a referral line so hospital can determine whether a patient identifying as homeless is known to DHS. 212-361-5590.
- For patients new to DHS (or not in shelter for past year), DHS expects the discharging hospital to document efforts to find alternative housing.
- DHS will make determinations on a referral within 1 business day for inpatient stays less than 30 days and within 2 business days for inpatient stays greater than 30 days.
- DHS is only accepting discharged patients between 9am and 3pm, Monday – Friday.
- If a homeless patient leaves the hospital AWOL, please advise the shelter system so they are aware that a patient may present without the discharge/referral steps being followed.

### My homeless patient is physically disabled or has ongoing medical needs. Is s/he allowed in the shelter system?

Homeless individuals who have physical disabilities or ongoing medical issues can live in Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelters and can request reasonable accommodations in the shelter, including but are not limited to:

- Assistance with wound care up to twice a day by a visiting nurse, if the wound is not weeping and draining;
- Access to a temporary bed for rest/convalescence with day-bed pass;
- Accessible bathroom and/or accessible site, including placement on first floor and/or in a building with an elevator, and a bed with adjustable height;
- Access to a refrigerator for medication storage;
- Monthly assistance with medication arrangement in pill boxes by visiting nurses;
- Post-discharge nurse visit for daily medication assistance up to 2 weeks;
- Medically necessary diet, for example, renal and diabetic meals; and
- Oxygen concentrator (not tank or canister/cylinder).

The health care provider should use this form <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/client-accom-request-form.pdf> to request a reasonable accommodation and include clinical support documentation.

More questions? Refer patients for an appointment with a LegalHealth attorney

[www.legalhealth.org](http://www.legalhealth.org)

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What can my patient do if the request for reasonable accommodation is denied? Seek legal services to determine if there is a basis to appeal.

My patient has gone through organ transplant surgery, can s/he be referred to the shelter system? If the patient has received life-saving surgery or treatment, his/her clinical conditions require a discussion with the DHS Office of Medical Director (OMD) at [HCF-DHSreferral@dhs.nyc.gov](mailto:HCF-DHSreferral@dhs.nyc.gov) prior to referral approval.

My homeless patient is a single pregnant adult, what shelter should she be referred to? Pregnant women should be referred to the DHS family intake system.

### Who is not eligible for discharge to shelter?

- Individuals must be able to perform activities of daily living, must have decisional capacity, and be able make needs known or follow commands (including ability to understand spoken, signed, visual or tactile language with or without an interpreter).
- Ventilators, cranial halo devices, oxygen tanks/cylinders of any size, and peritoneal dialysis machines are not allowed in the shelter.
- Patients that pose a safety risk, including imminent harm to self or others whether physical or due to hygiene (urinary incontinence or explosive diarrhea).
- Individuals with long term home care or visiting nurse needs (> 2 weeks)
- Individuals with severe immunosuppression (Absolute Neutrophil Count (AND <500mL).

What should I do if DHS denies admission to the shelter for a patient I think qualifies? Refer the patient to LegalHealth

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