

BARRY COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Policy: 7-K Treatment by Spiritual Means		Application: BCCMHA Staff and Providers
Approved: _____ Richard Thiemkey, MA Executive Director		
Reviewed 5/6/2026	Revised	First Effective 7/20/2022

PURPOSE

To define policy and procedures for recipients, guardians, or parent of a minor to request treatment by spiritual means.

POLICY

It is the policy of BCCMHA to assure recipients of mental health services are permitted to access treatment by spiritual means at the request of the recipient, parent of a minor child, or guardian. [AR 7351(1)]

“Treatment by Spiritual Means” encompasses a spiritual discipline or school of thought upon which a client wishes to rely to aid physical or mental recovery and includes easy access, at the client’s expense, both to printed, recorded, or visual material essential or related to treatment by spiritual means and to a symbolic object of similar significance. [AR 7001(y)/AR 7135(3)]

(3) Requests for printed, recorded, or visual material essential or related to treatment by spiritual means, and to a symbolic object of similar significance shall be honored and made available at the recipient’s expense.

A client will be allowed to practice their spiritual beliefs providing:

- a. Their practice is not deemed harmful to themselves or others;
- b. That their practice incurs no expense to the program;
- c. Their practice does not interfere with the treatment program, or violate the rights of others in the program;
- d. That their practice does not violate the law or court orders.

BCCMHA shall ensure the right to treatment by spiritual means by adopting policies and procedures, which include all of the following:

- a. Recourse to court proceedings when there is refusal of medication or other treatment for a minor; [AR 7135(6)(a)]
- b. Notice to the requesting person of a denial of a request and the reasons for denial; Administrative review or appeal process when treatment by spiritual means is denied. [AR 7135(6)(b), AR 7135(7)]

BCCMHA shall ensure that the opportunity for contact with agencies providing treatment by spiritual means shall be provided in the same manner as clients are permitted to see mental health professionals. [MHC 1704(2)/AR 7135(2)]

PROCEDURES

The “right to treatment by spiritual means” includes the right of clients, guardians, or parents of a minor to refuse medication or other treatment on spiritual grounds

which predate the current allegations of mental illness or disability, but does not extend to circumstances where either:

- a. A guardian or the facility has been empowered by a court to consent to or provide treatment and has done so.
- b. A client is presently dangerous to self or others and treatment is essential to prevent physical injury. [AR 7135(4) (a) (b)]

The right to treatment by spiritual means does not include the right:

- a. To use mechanical devices or chemical or organic compounds which are physically harmful.
- b. To engage in activity prohibited by law.
- c. To engage in activity which physically harms the client or others.
- d. To engage in activity which is inconsistent with court-ordered custody or voluntary placement by a person other than the recipient. [AR 7135(5)(a-d)]

If a minor's refusal of either medication or treatment poses a danger to either the minor or others, a petition will be made to the probate court to secure a court order for treatment.

BCCMHA may refer recipients to their own minister, local church of their choice, or to the interfaith council.

Requests for treatment by spiritual means should be made through BCCMHA Customer Service. If a request for treatment by spiritual means is denied, written notice will be given to the recipient, parent of a minor, or legal guardian, with an explanation for the denial. A denial of treatment by spiritual means by program staff may be appealed to the Office of Recipient Rights at the option of a person requesting treatment.

REFERENCES

Act 258, Public Acts of 1974

MCL 330.1001 through 300.2106

Rule 330.7001 through 330.7254

Administrative Rules of the Department of
Community Health

HCBS