

## **Referral Criteria to Ottawa Geriatric Psychiatry Services for outpatient services at Geriatric Psychiatry Community Services of Ottawa (GPCSO) and Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre (ROMHC)**

The Ottawa Geriatric Psychiatry Outpatient Services are a community (GPCSO) and hospital-based service (ROMHC) offering bilingual inter-professional support.

Consultation and treatment are provided, as appropriate, to patients with a valid health card referred by a physician.

We work collaboratively with referring physicians to provide consultation and psychiatric treatment as needed for geriatric patients with cognitive disorders and mental illnesses.

Patients who are presenting with psychiatric disorders for the first time and meet the criteria are appropriate for referral to GPCSO or ROMHC. Medically healthy seniors, with no age related issues, should be allowed to choose where they wish to receive their treatment including non-geriatric psychiatric services.

### **1. Criteria:**

- The patient should be 65 years or older with complex mental health needs, or younger than 65 who have a confirmed diagnosis of Alzheimer's or frontotemporal dementia.
- The patient should be medically stable
- A patient, whose needs are primarily for placement in a long term care facility or supportive services, is not a candidate.
- Geriatric patients with legal charges pending should be referred to a Forensic Program, as staff there would have the expertise to deal with both psychiatric and legal problems.
- Patients with substance or alcohol abuse problems who meet the criteria for the Addiction Services should be referred to a specific program.
- Patients previously followed by a psychiatrist, Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT), or Dual Diagnosis should remain under their care to maintain continuity of care. One time consultation is available, but we will not assume

care unless the person has complex geriatric mental health needs and it is in his/her best interest to be transferred.

- If a patient is seen by a Geriatric Psychiatrist and is in need of other services offered in a tertiary care setting, outpatient services will facilitate the appropriate referral. Other potential services to access in the Geriatric program include: Day Hospital, Inpatient Admission, Outreach Services (if patient is moving to LTC) or Royal Ottawa ECT services.

## **2. Triage and Wait Times:**

- New requests for consultation are reviewed and triaged
- A standardized referral form must be completed by a referring physician. If the patient is known to another psychiatrist, the referral must come from the psychiatrist.
- When a referral is identified as urgent on submission, the referring physician should call the Ottawa Geriatric Psychiatry Services, to prioritize the assessment and discuss the case.
- Priority will be assigned based on severity of illness and safety concerns.
- We are not an emergency service and any emergencies should be referred to the nearest emergency department. Urgent consultations can potentially be offered the next available appointment (usually within a month).
- Until the patient is assessed at either the ROMHC or GPCSO, it is the responsibility of the referring physician to ensure care.

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