



**nami**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

# Clackamas County

10202 SE 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite 501, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (503) 344-5050 info@namicc.org

## **My Relative/Friend Has Been Arrested. What Do I Do?**

*This document is a guide to help families cope with the criminal justice system in Clackamas County when a relative/friend who suffers from a mental illness is arrested. This informational guide was written by NAMI volunteers. We are not attorneys, and this is not intended to be a substitute for professional legal advice. Please assist your relative/friend in obtaining proper legal representation as appropriate.*

### **SUPPORT YOUR RELATIVE**

- If your relative/friend calls you and says that he/she has been arrested, help him/her stay calm and let him/her know you are there to help.
- If your relative/friend is being held in at the Clackamas County Jail, remind him/her that he/she has a right to have an attorney present when being questioned by police officers or detectives concerning the alleged crime.
- If your relative/friend is already at the Clackamas County Jail, he/she will be screened for mental illness, as well as other health concerns, upon arrival.
  - Assure your relative/friend that it is OK to discuss his/her physical and mental conditions and medications with the health screeners. It is important that he/she feels safe and is able to speak openly to jail staff.
- You should visit your relative/friend as often as you are able. Visiting hours vary. Please check the Clackamas County Sheriff's Department web site at [www.clackamas.us.sheriff/jail.html](http://www.clackamas.us.sheriff/jail.html) and select "Visiting Policy" for more details on visitation.

### **CONTACT THE JAIL**

*Clackamas County Jail is located at 2206 Kaen Road, Oregon City, OR 97045.*

*Main phone: (503) 722-6777*

*Jail lobby hours: 7am -11pm*

*Website: <http://www.clackamas.us/sheriff/jail.html>*

● **IMPORTANT: If you know or suspect that your relative/friend has had recent suicide attempts or thoughts, ask to speak with the Sergeant. Give him/her all the information you have!**

● Notify the jail medical staff that your relative/friend suffers from a mental illness and describe the diagnosis and any other concerns you might have.

· Be aware that while you can provide information to the jail staff, the staff cannot give you any information about your relative/friend due to confidentiality laws. However, you can ask to relative/friend to fill out a release of information (ROI) form. This will give the staff permission to talk to you about their care.

· Be aware that the Jail Mental Health Staff must conduct its own assessment and will select the best treatment for your relative/friend. As such, your relative/friend may not necessarily be prescribed the same medications.

● You may provide the jail staff with detailed medical and mental information by completing the Inmate Health Information Form. It is best to deliver the form to the jail by hand or by fax—address and fax number are at the bottom of the form.

● You may bring your relative/friend's prescribed medications to the jail. Make sure they are in their original containers.

· Be aware that medications probably will not be accessible until your relative/friend is completely screened and the Jail Mental Health Staff can verify and order medications.

· Be aware that medications may be returned to you if they are already available at the jail or if they were changed by the jail psychiatrist due to you relative/friend's current symptoms.

● If you have trouble reaching jail staff at the contact number above, you may try calling the Jail Medical Department directly at (503) 722-6775. Please be patient, though, as mental health staffers are often talking to inmates.

·As an alternative, you may try to reach the Jail Medical Liaison Lieutenant at (503) 722-6714.

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK JAIL STAFF**

What is the booking number?

What are the charges?

When is the court arraignment date and time?

Where will the arraignment be held?

What is the estimated length of stay?

Is your relative/friend is expected to be released directly? If so, ask for the time so you can be there to pick them up.

If your relative/friend is severely ill, ask if he/she can be taken to a psychiatric hospital with an involuntary hold for evaluation and treatment.

*NOTE: Much of this information is also readily available on the internet at <http://www.clackamas.us/sheriff/jail.html>. Click on "Inmate Roster." Enter his/her complete legal name to bring up full name and click on the name to get further information.*

## **PREPARING FOR COURT**

- Your relative/friend may want to retain a private attorney or use the public defender's office.

### **Private attorney**

- If your relative/friend has a private attorney, contact him/her and provide him/her with pertinent information regarding your relative/friend's case and mental health condition.
- If your relative/friend decides to retain a private attorney, be sure to select one that is well versed in helping people with mental illness. He/she must understand not only the law, but also how to access the treatment facilities and mental health services that are available.
- A private attorney will grant you more time, but remember you are paying for that access.

### **Public Defenders Office**

- If your relative/friend does not have, or cannot afford, an attorney, a Public Defender will be assigned to him/her at the arraignment. It is important that you attend the initial arraignment. Arrive early.
- Do not be afraid to use the Public Defender. Public Defenders often have knowledge of "the system" as it pertains to those who need mental health services. But remember that the Public Defender works for your relative/friend, not you.
- Public Defenders are extremely busy and do not have much time for telephone call. He/she will appreciate written or faxed correspondence.

- Provide information.

- Provide the attorney with an extensive medical/psychiatric/social history of your relative/friend. This information presented in writing will be very useful in pursuing the best outcome.

·If your relative/friend is using a Public Defender, you will probably meet the Public Defender on the day of the arraignment. Provide the Public Defender with brief, written statements of pertinent information concerning the current circumstances, diagnosis, and relevant history of your relative/friend's mental illness.

- Bail consideration.

·Consider carefully. Being in jail is an unpleasant experience for your relative/friend as well as the family. However, you must ask yourself: Will my relative/friend be able to comply with the terms of the bail and appear in court when required?

·Also, jail may be a safer place for a person with severe mental illness who is in crisis rather than having him/her wandering the streets with no help at all. While in jail, at least he/she will have shelter, will be fed, and will be given access to medication treatments.

## **ALTERNATIVE RESOURCE**

Clackamas County offers multiple resources at the **Transition Center** for those who are going to be released.

The **Transition Center** is located next to the jail. The Center can assist you and your relative/friend with information and referrals to:

- Mental Health Treatment
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Food
- Housing
- Employment
- Medical/Dental
- GED
- Oregon Health Plan Enrollment

*For further information about the Transition Center, please call (503) 722-6199.  
The center is located at 2219 Kaen Road, Oregon City, OR 97045*