

# You signed a deferment .... But what does that mean?

You were recently admitted to an inpatient mental health hospital under a petition for involuntary admission. While there, you met with a lawyer and signed a form called “Request to Defer Hearing on Commitment”, also known as “deferment”. Today, you are being discharged from the unit and remain on **Deferment Status** but what does that mean?

## What is a deferment?

A Deferment is a legal document that you signed agreeing to continue mental health treatment.

## If it is a legal document, can I be arrested and go to jail for not following the order?

No, you won't be put in jail or arrested, but you can be brought to an Emergency Room (ER) by the police for a mental health evaluation if you don't attend appointments, don't take medications as prescribed, or become mentally unwell.

## When admitted under involuntary status one of two things happens:

1: You have a court hearing; The judge puts you on a court order with certain requirements to ensure mental health stability. These orders are usually active for 180 days – if you do not follow the order, you can be brought to the ER for evaluation at any time and placed inpatient if necessary.

-OR-

2: **You can sign a deferment (which is what you did)**; when you signed this, you did not go to court because you agreed to follow the guidelines on the deferment. See your deferral for your requirements. You should have received a copy of the deferment.

## What happens now?

**You are expected to attend all appointments, take medications, and follow recommendations of your treatment team.**

## What if I don't agree with being on a deferment?

You can request a hearing by filing a ***Demand for Hearing*** with your county's Probate Court. There will be a court hearing and the judge will either place you on a court order OR dismiss the case. Please ask your therapist, case manager, or Bay Arenac Behavioral Health Emergency Services for more information.

## What if I don't attend my appointments?

If you do not attend your appointments, then you are not following the deferment agreement. Community Mental Health, your outpatient treatment team, family, or anyone who has concerns for your well-being, can file a ***Demand for Hearing*** with the courts. If the judge signs the ***Demand for Hearing***, it will be sent to law enforcement and police will bring you to the local ER for evaluation. Based on the evaluation you could be re-admitted to an inpatient hospital or it could be determined that you are safe to go home. If sent home, you will remain on the ***deferment status*** until its expiration date and you can be brought back to the ER if you don't follow treatment or if you become unwell.

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## What if I stop taking the medication prescribed to me?

If you do not take medications as prescribed, you are not following the deferment agreement. Community Mental Health, your outpatient treatment team, family, or anyone who has concerns for your well-being can file a Demand for Hearing with the courts. If the judge signs the Demand for Hearing, it will be sent to law enforcement and police will bring you to the nearest ER for evaluation. Based on the evaluation you could be re-admitted to an inpatient hospital until you are well again, or you could be determined safe to go home from the ER. If sent home, you will remain on the Deferment status until its expiration date and can be brought back to the ER if you don't follow treatment or if you become unwell. You can and should be talking to your doctor about medications, side effects, and effectiveness.

## You are leaving the hospital, what do you do next?

At discharge from the hospital, you were given medications/prescriptions to get you through to your appointment with your psychiatrist/PA/NP (prescriber). It is important you take medication as prescribed. If you don't like it, lose it, or anything happens that prevents you from taking your medications as prescribed, please call your psychiatrist/PA/NP at the number listed below. Not taking your medications is a reason for a **Demand for Hearing** to be filed.

You have an appointment scheduled with your outpatient treatment team; you must attend that appointment. If unable to attend it, call and reschedule. A no show is reason for a Demand for Hearing to be filed.

## What is a Demand for Hearing?

When you don't follow appointments, don't take medications, or are mentally unwell, BABH will file a **Demand for Hearing** with Probate Court asking that you be brought to the nearest ER for an evaluation. If you are sent home, you will remain on **deferment status**. If you are admitted to an inpatient mental health hospital, then you will be scheduled for a court hearing.

**If you have questions, please call your Case Manager, Therapist, or**

**Bay Arenac Behavioral Emergency Services (24/7) 989-895-2300**

### Discharge appointments:

Psychiatrist/PA/NP: \_\_\_\_\_ Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

- Psychiatrist/PA/NP phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

- Psychiatrist/PA/NP address: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

- Case Manager phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

- Case Manager address: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist: \_\_\_\_\_ Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

- Therapist phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

- Therapist address: \_\_\_\_\_