

I AM A VOLUNTARY PATIENT AT A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL WHO WANTS TO LEAVE

Voluntary patient means that you admitted yourself into a psychiatric hospital or your appointed guardian admitted you to a psychiatric hospital.

As a **voluntary patient**, you have the right to request your release from the hospital.

- The hospital must inform you of your right to ask to be released from the hospital.
- To request your release from the hospital, you must write a **three-day letter**.
- If you ask, the hospital must provide you with help writing this letter.

What do I put in a Three-Day Letter?

- Your letter can be short.
- Write your letter to the hospital's Medical Director, and state that you want to leave.
- Hospital staff, with approval from your county Mental Health Board, will decide whether or not to release you or to ask the court for an order to keep you at the hospital.

After you hand in your three-day letter, the hospital has three (3) business days (Monday through Friday, not weekends and holidays) to tell you whether or not you can leave. It is important to know that, even if you signed yourself in voluntarily, hospital staff can keep you if they think you should stay by filing papers to try to commit you.

One of three things can happen after you sign a three-day letter:

The Hospital Agrees

- Your request is approved.
- You get to leave the hospital.

The Hospital Wants You to Stay

- Hospital staff must file papers (called an affidavit) within three (3) business days of receiving your letter.
- Your letter becomes a request for a hearing.

Immediate Release

- The hospital staff does not file the affidavit within three (3) business days.
- You are allowed to leave immediately.