

**St. Mary's College of Maryland
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
Emergency Petition Guide**

An emergency petition is a legal process that allows a police officer, licensed medical professional, or licensed mental health professional to bring an individual to the hospital when they are at risk to hurt themselves, or to protect the property or safety of others. At St. Mary's College of Maryland, staff who can legally file emergency petitions include: Licensed Clinical Counselors, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Nurse Practitioners, Special Police Officers and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners.

An emergency petition does not mean the student will be admitted to the hospital. A student meets Emergency Petition Criteria when mental illness is suspected and/or present and they present an immediate danger to themselves or others.

If a student meets Emergency Petition criteria, they will be transported by EMS or law enforcement to the emergency department at Medstar St. Mary's Hospital 25500 Point Lookout Road, Leonardtown Maryland, 20650. Law enforcement may arrive on campus at the request of The Office of Public Safety, The Wellness Center - Health Services, and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Staff members at the respective offices may deem the student is in crisis to the extent where emergency services are recommended to be involved.

If the student is transported in a law enforcement vehicle, it is St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policy that they be handcuffed both for their safety and the safety of the officer. If there are medical needs/concerns, an ambulance may be called to transport the student to the emergency department. If this occurs, the officer will meet the ambulance at the hospital.

When a student is brought to the Emergency Department (ED) under the emergency petition they will have to change into a hospital gown and remove jewelry and accessories. They will not be allowed to have any belongings including cell phones. A phone can be provided if they need to make or receive a call. A staff person will be assigned to stay with them to make sure they cannot hurt themselves.

When a student is sent to the hospital under an emergency petition they will be seen by several medical professionals, including a psychiatric specialist. This medical health professional will perform a detailed psychiatric assessment.

If the student screens positive for suicidal ideation, interventions for their safety will be implemented based on the risk level determined by the risk assessment. The student will be reassessed for suicidal ideation if there are any changes in their status to include a change in location, worsening symptoms, or a change in the time of discharge.

Following the assessment, a student may be admitted to the hospital for a longer amount of time if it is determined the student meets criteria for psychiatric inpatient care. Medstar St. Mary's Hospital does not admit children under 16 years old. If the age of 16 and younger the student will be transferred to another hospital. A psychiatrist may be involved in the student's care and can arrange a transfer to a psychiatrist if needed.

What Happens in the Emergency Department and After a Student is Discharged?

If it is determined that the student is safe to return to campus, they will be discharged with a safety plan that they will complete with the help of a mental health professional at the hospital. If not already connected, referrals will be provided to a psychiatrist or therapist. The hospital offers STS bus tickets and Uber vouchers to return to campus. They may also call the St. Mary's College of Maryland Office of Public Safety at 240-895-4911 for additional assistance.

The student should plan to meet with a counseling staff member from Counseling and Psychological Services within 24 hours of release from the local hospital on weekdays and within 48 hours during the weekend. Counseling Services is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Our offices can be reached at 240-895-2159. Please call ahead for an appointment or attend our walk-in hours. Walk-in hours are provided Monday-Friday from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm Please bring all hospital documentation.

Counseling staff will evaluate the student's level of safety, review the student's safety plan, create a safety plan if none exists with the student, and assist the student in accessing any additional resources to include a referral to outside mental health providers.

Additional Resources

988 National Crisis Hotline

ProtoCall - 24/7 toll free Helpline for SMCM Students: 240-895-4200

Special thanks to the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership:

<https://healthystmarys.com/navigating-through-youth-mental-health-suicide-prevention-a-tool-for-parents-and-guardians/>