

**To: Facility Administrator - Short-term Facility**

**From: Patients' Rights Advocate**

**Re: Voting**

As you know, Tuesday, \_\_\_\_\_, 2004 is election day. This memo is to provide you with some suggestions to ensure that registered voters hospitalized in your facility will be able to exercise their right to vote:

- Where possible, assist patients who are registered voters to vote by arranging for passes and transportation to and from polling places.
- Where passes are not possible, assist patients in requesting and returning emergency absentee ballots.

**Registered voters** who become hospitalized on/before election day may request an absentee ballot by filling out an application for emergency absentee/hospitalized voter ballot. Once completed, these applications may be exchanged at the Registrar of Voters at address for absentee ballots on \_through election day, Tuesday, \_\_\_\_\_, 2004. I have included a copy of the registrar's notice regarding hospitalized voter voting. Please read it carefully.

Here are some suggestions to make this process run more smoothly:

- Announce the availability of absentee ballot applications at community meeting.
- Designate a staff member to act as a representative to distribute, collect and return the applications to the Registrar of Voters where they will be exchanged for ballots.
- Have the designated staff member collect the completed ballots and return them to any polling place in the county before 8:00 P.M., Tuesday, \_\_ , 2004.

Name of the Registrar of Voters, Absentee Ballot Section will be sending additional emergency/hospitalized voter applications to all facilities later this month. If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact her/him at \_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your cooperation in this process.

**To: Facility Administrator - Long-term facility**  
**From: Patients' Rights Advocate**  
**Re: Access to Voter Registration Materials and Absentee**

## **Ballots**

As you know, this is an election year. I would like to solicit your cooperation in assisting residents of your facility in exercising their right to vote. Persons on short-term LPS holds retain the right to vote and, as explained in the attached memo, persons under conservatorship retain the right to vote unless that right has been specifically taken away by the court. Never-the-less mental health clients are traditionally disenfranchised. It is my hope that with your cooperation we can make this election year different.

In the interest of facilitating resident voter participation, you should be aware of the following dates:

**Last day to register:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2004

**Last day to request an absentee ballot:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2004

**Election Day:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2004

As you can imagine, involving interested residents in the voting process is a task that will require the support and cooperation of those who closely with these individuals. I would like to provide you with information and offer some suggestions to make this process easier:

## **Voter Registration Materials**

I have enclosed a copy of the state Department of Mental Health information notice outlining county mental health and county contract providers' responsibilities under the National Voter Registration Act for your information.

To request voter registration cards, you must fill out the "Voter Registration Card Statement of Distribution" (attached). The completed form can be faxed to the

Secretary of State's office at (916) 653-3214. The Elections Division will process the request within 48 hours and will mail the cards to you.

Residents may return voter registration cards to the election official by mail on their own, however, if facility staff take responsibility for returning the completed registration cards, staff must complete the receipt affixed to the bottom of the voter registration card and give it to the resident. Further, the staff member(s) distributing voter registration cards must mail or deliver all completed cards in their possession to the county election official **within three working days** of receipt from the resident.

### **Absentee Voting**

Requests for absentee ballots are mailed to voters with their sample ballots. Normally, these requests must be returned to the registrar of voters at least seven days prior to the election. However, if a registered voter is hospitalized during the final week before the election, he/she may request in writing that an absentee ballot be delivered to him/her.

Finally, I would like to suggest some ways in which you might assist your residents and facilitate their participation in the election process:

- Make voter registration materials available at your facility
- Facilitate group discussions of candidates and issues
- Designate a staff person to assist with distributing and returning voter registration cards.
- Some long-term facilities have succeeded in having the facility designated as a polling place to facilitate resident voting. Contact the county registrar's office to inquire about this at your facility.
- If your facility is not a designated polling place, arrange for election day passes and transportation to and from polling places for registered voters.
- Where passes are not possible, assist residents with requesting absentee ballots.