

County of Financial Responsibility (COFR) Dispute Resolution Committee - Case 2008-4

Committee:	Doug Ward	Community Mental Health for Central Michigan
	Chuck Kopinski	West Michigan Community Mental Health
	Cindy Lowe	Kalamazoo Community Mental Health
	Mark Kielhorn	Department of Community Health

The Committee met in person and via conference call on December 16, 2008 concerning a dispute between two county CMHSPs. CMHSP representatives from the two counties participated to explain the case and the rationale for each CMHSP's position.

Issue: An individual arrived in County A by bus on August 17, 2008 and spent the night in a homeless shelter. In the morning, shelter staff called police because he was exhibiting bizarre behavior and was in an obvious confused state. He was admitted to the local medical center. On October 22, 2008, he was transferred to Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital. When initially admitted, his only identification was an expired Virginia driver's license. Subsequently it was determined that he had Michigan identification when he earlier began an intake process at a hospital in County B, but this was never completed and the identification has not been found. His last known address was in County B beginning in March 2008 and extending into August 2008, with the rent paid through July.

County B asserts that the individual is a homeless person in County A who has expressed an intent to stay in County A. It says that the individual is a frequent traveler with no ties to any particular geography and, therefore, is the responsibility of whatever county he happens to reside in when hospitalized. In addition, County B has never provided him any services. County B says that it has now enrolled the person as of October 9, 2008 and has offered to take responsibility as of that date, but that County A is the COFR for the period from August 16 through October 8.

County A asserts that the individual is transient in County A, having spent less than one day in the county before being hospitalized. It maintains that the person is a resident of County B because he has a rental address there to which his SSI payments were delivered through September. He is also enrolled in ABW through County B. They also say that the individual has not been able to clearly state his intent to remain in any place. Therefore, County B should be the COFR for the entire period since County B was the place where he last lived independently.

Resolution: This individual is a transient in County A since he arrived on a bus, spent one night in a homeless shelter and then was admitted to the hospital. There is no way to determine his intent to stay in County A or even the reason why he traveled there in the first place. He lived independently in County B, as demonstrated by his rental in County B for more than four months (which was still being held for him when admitted), and by his use of the address for delivery of SSI payments. County B is the last place that he lived independently, so County B is the COFR.