

# My Family Member Has Been Arrested, What Do I Do?

## nami

### **Tulare County, California**

This information is designed to help families cope with the criminal justice system in Tulare County when a family member who suffers from mental illness is arrested.

### **Support Your Relative**

If your relative/friend has been arrested, help them stay calm and let them know you'll help. Remind them that they have a right to have an attorney present if being questioned by police officers or detectives. Tell them they can expect to be interviewed by Jail medical and mental health staff. Let them know it's OK for them to discuss their physical and mental condition, diagnosis, medications, etc. It is important that they feel safe to speak openly on these topics.

### **Contact The Main Jail**

**Call: (559) 733-6823** and ask for the court arraignment date and address, booking number, location of your relative, and the dates and times when visits are permitted. **IMPORTANT:** If you know or suspect that your relative has had recent suicide attempts or thoughts, call the Jail and ask to speak with the Watch Commander; give him/her all the information you have.

### **Contact The Jail Medical Department**

**Call: 559-731-3285 x159** and ask to speak with the Mental Health Manager. After business hours, ask to speak with the booking or Special Housing Nurse. **Due to patient confidentiality laws**, the staff will not be able to give you information about your family member's medical or mental condition without a signed consent, but they are able to obtain information from you.

### **Send A Fax**

Prepare a fax requesting that your relative be screened for placement in the mental health unit. Call (559)-713-3285 and ask for the corresponding fax numbers. On the cover page, indicate whether your relative has provided you with a written confidentiality waiver. If your relative has not done so, ask that he/she be asked to sign one while in jail.

## **Head this fax with:**

- Your relative's full legal name
- Date of birth
- Booking number
- Location

## **In the body of the fax include:**

- His/her diagnosis
- Their psychiatrist's name, phone number, and address
- The medications prescribed for your family member (name, dosage, and time of day to be administered)
- Note if a particular medication has proven to be ineffective, dangerous and/or has uncomfortable side effects
- Note if a suicide attempt is a possibility or if there are any other serious concerns
- Describe any other urgent medical conditions, apart from mental illness, that might require immediate attention such as diabetes, high blood pressure, seizures, heart problems, etc. and the necessary medications to be given
- Include their medical doctor's name, address, and phone number

**DO NOT address any impending charges against your relative in this fax. Keep a copy of this fax for future reference. If your relative is transferred to a different facility you will need to fax this information again.**

## **Office Of Patiens' Rights Call 800-905-5597**

*This office provides assistance for the following reasons:*

- To educate family members on the requirements of detention facilities regarding mentally ill inmates
- To ensure that county jails make mental health treatment services available to all inmates who need these services

Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency