

**BY-LAWS  
FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE  
MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY SERVICE**

**1. Purpose**

The Louisiana Mental Health Advocacy Service is established in accordance with LSA-R.S. 28:64. The stated purpose of the Board is set forth in the statute, namely:

- 1) Appoint a director of the service.
- 2) Establish or approve general policy guidelines for the operation of the service to provide legal counsel and representation for the mentally disabled and children of this state in order to ensure that their legal rights are protected. However, the board shall not have supervisory power over the conduct of particular cases.
- 3) Review and evaluate the operations of the service and emphasize special training for attorneys hired by the service.
- 4) Review and approve an annual budget for the service.
- 5) Review and approve an annual report on the operation of the service and submit such report to the legislature, the governor and the chief justice of the supreme court, and
- 6) Approve and authorize contractual arrangements sought by the director.

**2. Membership**

The service is governed by a board of trustees consisting of nine members made up of the deans of the law schools or their designated faculty members from Loyola University of the South, Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College Law Schools and from the medical and law schools of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College and Tulane University of Louisiana, the president of the Mental Health Association of Louisiana or his representative, and a selected member from the Louisiana Medical Society and the Louisiana State Bar Association.

When it is apparent that a Board member must resign the chairperson will promptly notify the appointing organization, inform them of the vacancy, and request that they appoint someone promptly.

Board members are ordinarily expected to serve for at least three years.

## **BY-LAWS**

Page 2

### **3. Meetings**

The Board shall meet at least once a year, but will meet as often as necessary to conduct required business. The time and place of meetings shall be decided upon by the Board. Notice shall be sent to the last known email address of all active members of the Board at least 10 days prior to the meeting if possible. The notice shall contain an agenda.

Special meetings can be called by the chairperson and must be called within fifteen days of receipt of a formal request by a majority of the members. Reasonable notice must be provided for special meetings.

### **4. Officers**

There shall be elected a chairperson, co-chairperson or vice chairperson, and secretary. Election of officers takes place as needed. The chairperson or his/her designee shall be the authorized spokesperson for the Board.

### **5. Committees**

Committees shall be established as needed by the Board. The Executive committee will be composed of the chairperson(s), vice chairperson and the secretary.

### **6. Quorum**

A quorum shall be considered present when there are four persons present.

### **7. Attendance**

Attendance at all Board meetings is expected of members unless the director is advised in writing or by telephone prior to the meeting. Attendance is permitted via telephone or other electronic means if arranged with director prior to the meeting. In the event of two consecutive absences without notification of the director, or in the event of failure to attend 50% of the scheduled meetings in a calendar year, the chairperson will notify the Board member and the appointing organization in writing.

### **8. Amendments to By-Laws**

All amendments to these guidelines shall be presented in written form at a regular or special meeting of the Board. Written notice shall be sent to all members at least ten days before the next meeting when a vote will be taken on the changes.