

What is a Specialized Mental Health Rehabilitation Facility (SMHRF)?

A SMHRF is a freestanding residential treatment facility, similar to a nursing home, for individuals living with a mental health condition. Facilities provide long-term mental health care including individual therapy, group therapy, skills-building, and medication management under 24-hour supervision to build skills for independent living.

Eligibility

Eligible residents must be at least 18 years old and diagnosed with serious mental illness. Most facilities require an individual to have Social Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI – often referred to as “disability benefits”) and Medicaid coverage. Some facilities permit some flexibility if applications are pending.

For entry into a SMHRF, the facility must review the individual’s full medical record and a PreAdmission Screening (PAS) must be administered. The PAS is conducted by a third party and ensures the individual is appropriate for placement in the SMHRF. The PAS screening is usually administered in the hospital but can be arranged in the community.

What is the Williams Consent Decree?

Federal law states that individuals with disabilities, including mental health conditions, have the right to receive services in the “least restrictive” environment. This means that they should receive mental health care in a setting that allows them as much freedom and independence as is possible, given their clinical needs.

The Williams Consent Decree was created as the result of a lawsuit against the State of Illinois. The lawsuit claimed Illinois was in violation of Title II of the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act by needlessly segregating Plaintiffs, a class of 4,500 residents with serious mental illnesses living in institutional settings, and denying them opportunities to receive services in more integrated community-based settings.

The purpose of the Williams Consent Decree is to afford residents of nursing facilities/Specialized Mental Health Rehabilitation Facilities (SMHRFs) opportunities to live in the community with support services to address their mental health and wellness needs; to assist them in maximizing their personal recovery in their own homes and to assist them in having quality of life outside of an institutional setting.

Who is a Class Member?

“Class Member” is a term used to describe a person who might be eligible for services under the Williams Consent Decree. This would include any Illinois resident who is 18 years and older who:

- Is institutionalized in privately owned nursing facilities classified as SMHRFs,
- Has a serious mental illness, AND
- Has the appropriate supports and services to potentially be able to live in an integrated community setting

NAMI Chicago’s Williams Outreach – “Moving On” Project

The Williams Moving On Project at NAMI Chicago offers outreach to SMHRF residents across the state of Illinois to explain the Williams Consent Decree, their rights to an assessment under the Consent Decree and the services available within the community.

To learn more about the Moving On Project, call NAMI Chicago’s Helpline at (833) 626-4244 or email us at info@namichicago.org.

Services provided to Eligible Class Members

Class members who meet all of the above criteria may be eligible for the following services through the Williams Consent Decree.

- Assistance with finding housing in the community of your choice
- Flexible community services and supports according to your needs
- Subsidized rent
- Financial assistance with security deposit and other one-time move-in costs