



Maryland General Service Treatment Facilities Committee Bridging the Gap (BTG) Instructions to the Local Coordinator

Love
And
Service

Dear Local Coordinator (LC),

A newcomer is currently in Treatment Facility and is requesting a [Bridging the Gap](#) (BTG) Temporary Contact (TC).

1. Please acknowledge by replying if this request is within your assigned area and you are able to assist.
2. Review the attached documents and locate a TC for the newcomer.
3. If you need clarification about an item on the Temporary Contact Request Form, contact the BTG Facility Committee or the person identified in the lower section of the Temporary Contact Request form. Please note that discharge dates are usually not known when a request form is completed. However, the date is normally determined within a week prior to the discharge.
4. Please provide the TC with the following items:
 - a. Bridging the Gap Fact Sheet
 - b. Temporary Contact Request Form
5. Ensure the TC understands what he/she needs to do as a Temporary Contact:
 - The TC should review the Bridging the Gap Fact Sheet.
 - The TC should also review the Temporary Contact Request Form to make sure that he or she is compatible with the newcomer. For example: Are they of the same sex, approximately the same age, will they be attending meetings in the same area, and can the TC assist a person who has listed problems with medications or other drugs?
 - Ensure the TC knows that if he or she is assigned a newcomer:
 - It is the **newcomer's responsibility** to initiate the **1st contact** with the TC while they are in the facility. If the newcomer does not do so, the TC should let the LC know.
 - Thereafter, attempt to make regular contact, with the newcomer prior to his or her release.
 - Pre-release **meetings** with the newcomer are recommended; therefore, during one of the early contacts, determine a mutual time to meet at the facility.
 - Temporary Contacts should **not** call the facility or go to meet with the patient/newcomer on **their own initiative**. The newcomer has to first ensure the facility knows when the TC is planning to visit the facility.
 - Some facilities have regular hours when a Bridging the Gap TC can meet with newcomers. Other facilities may require approval from the newcomer's counselor.
 - Privacy laws do not permit the Treatment Facility to release patient information without consent. That means, unless there is a scheduled BTG visit or the facility has a written waiver on file, the facility may not acknowledge that the newcomer is a patient.
 - If a TC is not contacted by the newcomer, after the discharge date, the TC may consider making an attempt to communicate with the newcomer.
5. If the TC is able to serve, the LC should complete the Newcomer's Instructions Form and provide the TC with a copy. This will ensure the TC knows what information is being given to the newcomer.
6. The TC should e-mail the completed Newcomer's Instructions Form to the facility committee that initiated the request. The region(s) that originally received the TC request should also get the courtesy copy. The cc to the region(s) provides a notification that the request is being handled. If e-mail is unavailable the form can be faxed to 443-451-8255.
7. The LC should follow up with the TC and/or newcomer to determine if everything went well and then provide the facility committee with a follow-up report.