

## Section V: Understanding Behavioral Health Emergencies

### IF YOU HAVE A BEHAVIORAL HEALTH EMERGENCY

A Behavioral Health Emergency is a serious mental health and/or substance use problem involving an individual who is demonstrating one of the following:

- Placing their health at serious risk
- Having disorganized or dangerous thoughts
- Threatening harm or causing harm to self, or
- Threatening harm or causing harm to others

**In a mental health and/or substance use emergency, you should do one of the following immediately (You do not need to get approval to get emergency services):**

- Call 911 if a life is in danger
- Go to the nearest emergency room
- Call your provider, if you have one, or
- If a child or adolescent is in crisis, call the emergency mobile psychiatric service (EMPS) for your town at 211
- For adults 18 and older, you can identify crisis services using the town locator on the DMHAS website: Crisis Services or call 911

When you call for help, try to remain calm, stay focused and state clearly why you and/or your child is not safe or why the safety of others is at risk. Speak clearly. Let the person know why emergency care is needed. Be prepared to give the following information as well as to answer additional questions:

- Name, phone number, and address of caller
- Name of person needing evaluation
- Why you are calling including diagnosis if known and actions/signs observed
- Examples as to why you or your child is not able to keep safe, or the safety of others is at risk
- Give a brief history of the build up to the crisis situation over the last 24-48 hours, and
- Past history of hospitalizations

After an emergency, you should contact your provider or your child's provider to continue needed treatment and support.