

## Social Services Outpatient Protocol *for High Risk Telephone Calls*

If a telephone call is received that indicates that the person calling, either a patient known to the social worker or someone not known to the social worker, is *at risk of self harm or of harm to others*, the social worker:

- Determines the level of risk the patient presents to self or others [*see suicide or homicide protocols for more details*]
- If the patient is at high and imminent risk of harm to self or others, the social worker:
  - Calls 911 and/or
  - Sections the patient by filling out a Section 12-A and faxing it to the police station in the area of the caller. [NOTE: If the caller is calling from out of state, the social worker *cannot* section the patient. The Section 12-A law that allows social workers to sign off on a Section 12-A is only valid in Massachusetts. For out of state high risk patients, the social worker calls 911.]
- If the patient is *voluntarily* asking for help, another option is to use *the Emergency Services Programs (ESP)* available throughout the state. These programs can often evaluate patients at their own homes or in locations outside an emergency room. For more information, go to <http://www.masspartnership.com/esp>.