

STANDARDS AND LEADERSHIP GUIDE

for PARTIAL HOSPITALIZATION &
INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAMS



VOLUME I: STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES
VOLUME II: LEADERSHIP AND IMPLEMENTATION

2025 EDITION



Standards and Leadership Guide for Partial Hospitalization & Intensive Outpatient Programs

**Volume I: Standards and Guidelines
Volume II: Leadership and Implementation**

2025 EDITION



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This publication provides standards and guidance for the development and operation of Partial Hospitalization and Intensive Outpatient Programs. While it reflects the expertise of subject matter experts and the AABH Training, Research, and Publication Committee, it is not intended to substitute for legal, clinical, or regulatory consultation. Programs should verify requirements with applicable accrediting bodies, state and federal regulators, and institutional policies.

Primary Content Creator/Editor: Peter Thomas, PhD

Secondary Editor: Stephen Michael, DrPH

Cover Design: TucsonStephen LLC

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For more information, contact:

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)

info@aabh.org



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Together, these two volumes represent the cumulative work of the AABH Training, Research, and Publication Committee, as well as the collective insights of many program leaders across the country who served as the review panel. The 2025 editions reflect significant updates and restructuring to align with current best practices and to better support both organizational compliance and leadership development.

These editions were authored and prepared by **Peter Thomas, PhD**. Deep appreciation is extended to all who contributed to previous editions and to those whose ongoing feedback informs the evolution of these resources.

Special thanks are also due to the many program directors and frontline staff whose lived experience and operational insight shaped the guidance provided here.

2025 Review Panel

Stephen Michael, DrPH

*Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)
Tucson, AZ*

James Rosser, LCSW, CMT-P

*Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA
Los Angeles, CA*

Kimberly Brown, LMFT

*Sarasota Memorial Hospital
Sarasota, FL*

Gretchen Johnson, DNP, MSN, RN-BC

Jenna Strodtbeck, LMSW
*Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services
Grand Rapids, MI*

Rebecca G. Boswell, PhD

*Princeton Center for Eating Disorders
Penn Medicine Princeton Health
Princeton, NJ*

Alyssa Sebastian, MA, LPC-MHSP

*Embrace U
Brentwood, TN*

Maurice Fried, PhD

*Alameda Health System
San Leandro, CA*

Faith Trussell, MSN, PMH RN-BC, NE-BC

*Psychiatric Medical Care
Brentwood, TN*

Jessica Lavender, MS, LPC-MHSP

*Integrated Telehealth Partners
West Des Moines, Iowa*

Brianne Baker, MA, LMFT

*Scrivner Center – El Camino Hospital
Mountain View, CA*

Andrew Cruz, MD

*Guidelight Health
Glencoe, IL*

Jemma Coster, RN, MSN, PMH NP-BC

Carrie Gene, LCSW
*Signature Healthcare
Las Vegas, NV*

Erin S. Leger, M.Ed., LPC-S

Beth Swartzendruber, LCSW-BACS
*Compass Health
Crowley, LA*

Kristin Powers, LCSW

*Providence Health
Portland, OR*

Kathy DeMaio, MSW, LCSW, LCADC

Alan Giordano, MSW, LCSW
Donna Kiley, MSW, LCSW
Peter Maclearie, MSW, LCSW
Erica Munger-Stigliano, MA
Philip Tran, BS, RN
Chelsea Williamson, MSW, LCSW
*Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health
Princeton, NJ*

How to Use This Guide

This two-volume guide is designed to serve as a practical, flexible reference for professionals involved in Partial Hospitalization and Intensive Outpatient Program leadership.

- *Volume I: Standards and Guidelines* defines what programs must deliver—covering foundational expectations, clinical operations, compliance, quality, and administrative structure.
- *Volume II: Leadership and Implementation* focuses on how to implement these standards—offering strategies for day-to-day operations, team management, regulatory navigation, and strategic leadership.

The guide is structured for modular use. You may read it sequentially or go directly to topics that align with your role, setting, or priorities. Cross-references appear throughout to help you connect standards with implementation tools, case examples, or background context.

Although national frameworks such as those from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and accrediting bodies (e.g., TJC, CARF) are referenced for illustrative purposes, this guide is intentionally payer-agnostic and accreditation-neutral. Organizations should consult their state regulations, payer agreements, and chosen accreditation bodies to determine how best to align local operations with the core standards presented here.

External citations are provided for federal policies, clinical guidelines, and other authoritative references. Some resources—such as accreditation manuals—may require subscriptions; consult your internal compliance or quality lead for access.

Each section includes actionable strategies, implementation insights, and key takeaways to support your leadership journey. Whether you are new to program administration or refining a mature system, we encourage you to revisit the guide as challenges arise—using it as a trusted companion in the pursuit of excellence.

Implementation Tips for Getting Started

Tip #1 – Assess Readiness and Capacity

[Appendix K](#) includes two tools: a *Leadership Competency Rating Tool* and a *Section-Based Readiness Tool*. These instruments help organizations evaluate both individual leadership capacity and program-level implementation. Together, they support structured, evidence-informed planning, identify areas for development, and guide ongoing quality improvement efforts.

Tip #2 – Anchor Tools in Policy

Before finalizing any local resources, review [Appendix I](#) (Authoritative Resources) and [Appendix G](#) (Role of Regulatory Bodies and Payers) to ensure alignment with regulatory and payer expectations. Appendix G also includes a [Regulatory Reconciliation Checklist](#) to help identify compliance gaps and guide policy updates.

Tip #3 – Create Local Implementation Tools

[Appendix H](#) provides a framework to help you create tools that reflect your unique population, setting, and regulatory landscape. You are also encouraged to connect with the AABH membership community via the listserv or monthly meetings to share ideas, get feedback, and learn what others have successfully implemented.

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