The definition of mental health professional from Title 18 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, Section 7101(13):

"Mental health professional" means a person with professional training, experience and demonstrated competence in the treatment of mental illness, who shall be a physician, psychologist, social worker, mental health counselor, nurse or other qualified person designated by the commissioner.

By agreement with Vermont State Hospital (VSH) and designated general hospitals (DH), only QMHP's who are designated by the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) Commissioner or designee, and employed by a Designated Agency (DA), can screen and serve as the applicant for involuntary psychiatric admissions.

QUALIFICATIONS

♦ Education and Experience:

1. **Master’s degree in human services field (licensure preferred) and:**
   a. Clinical exposure to populations with major mental illness, and
   b. 1-2 years experience providing community services for people with at least 2 of the following: mental illness, substance abuse or serious emotional disorders, and
   c. Appropriate experience and training in crisis evaluation and intervention in a community setting, as determined by the DA Emergency Services Director or designee.

   or

2. **Bachelor’s degree in related human services field and:**
   a. Clinical exposure to populations with major mental illness, and
   b. 2-3 years experience providing community services for people with at least 2 of the following: mental illness, substance abuse or serious emotional disorders, and
   Appropriate experience and training in crisis evaluation and intervention in a community setting, as determined by the DA Emergency Services Director or designee.

   or

3. **Bachelor’s degree in a field unrelated to human services and:**
   a. Clinical exposure to populations with major mental illness, and
   b. 3-5 years experience providing community services for people with at least 2 of the following: mental illness, substance abuse or serious emotional disorders, and
   c. Appropriate experience and training in crisis evaluation and intervention in a community setting, as determined by the DA Emergency Services Director or designee.
4. If an applicant does not meet the qualifications but meets other criteria and has experience in providing crisis services in the community to severely mentally ill individuals, an application may be submitted for designation consideration. The application should include information that explains the reason(s) for the exception.

♦ **Demonstrated Knowledge of and Training in:**

1. Vermont Mental Health Statutes
2. Emergency exam, warrant, non-emergency exam (process and documentation)
3. VSH emergency exam admission criteria and procedures
4. Conditional release, Order of Non-hospitalization, Preplacement Visit
5. QMHP-specific training
6. Familiarity with community resources (i.e., crisis beds, respite options, general hospitals, or other options for voluntary treatment)
7. Screenings for involuntary treatment (observation preferred)
8. Special needs and services of populations being served
9. Forensic screening at court

**DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESS FOR DESIGNATION**

**Step One:**
The DA will submit a completed and signed Application for Designation as a Qualified Mental Health Professional form to:

VT Department of Health  
Department of Mental Health  
Acute Care Program Chief  
108 Cherry Street, P.O. Box 70  
Burlington, VT  05402-0070

The application must be accompanied by:

- A letter of endorsement authored and signed by the DA’s Executive Director.
- A copy of the applicant’s resume (include current work experience with the DA that is related to the QMHP designation criteria)
- The QMHP Certification Form signed by the applicant (the DA is responsible for ensuring that the relevant statutes and procedures are made available to the applicant).
- If the applicant is not an employee of the requesting DA, a copy of a contract describing the relationship and responsibilities of the applicant to the DA must be submitted. In addition, evidence must be provided that the individual will be available to the DMH legal division and to appear in court as needed. If a QMHP is a hospital employee, there must be an independent review conducted by a DA QMHP prior to completing an application for emergency exam for admission to that hospital.
Step Two:
DMH Acute Care Team and DMH Medical Director will review the application form and supporting documentation.
- If additional information is needed, a request will be sent to the DA Emergency Services Director or designee.
- If a request is denied, the applicant and DA Emergency Services Director will be notified in writing. This will include the reason(s) for denial and the criteria the applicant must meet to be re-considered for QMHP designation.

Step Three:
DMH sends copies of the designation as a QMHP, signed by the VDH Commissioner or designee, to the applicant and the DA Emergency Services Director.

PROCESS FOR RE-DESIGNATION

Commissioner designated QMHPs must participate in QMHP-specific training provided by DMH every two years in order to retain this designation. These trainings are available from DMH upon request by a DA. Additional training activities will be developed and available by the end of FY 2007.

A list will be provided to DA Emergency Services Directors/Coordinators at least annually with the QMHP designation expiration dates for staff at each DA. QMHPs who are designated on or before July 1, 2006 will need to have documentation of QMHP-specific training by 2 years from that date (July 1, 2008). Those who receive QMHP designation after July 1, 2006 will need to have documentation of QMHP-specific training by 2 years from the date of designation. A QMHP failing to meet the training requirements at the time of re-designation may not be re-designated.

Rev. 10/20/2006