

FILED

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )

IN THE PROBATE COURT

JUN 12 2020

GREENVILLE COUNTY  
PROBATE COURT

COUNTY OF GREENVILLE )

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: CIVIL COMMITMENTS  
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, civil commitments have been and will continue to be processed using procedures most likely to limit human contact and surface transmissions while satisfying the constitutional and statutory requirements set forth in federal and state law.

As such, all documents incident to civil commitments will be transmitted by encrypted email or other secure electronic methods to avoid surface transmission and the quarantining of documents. This directive is in keeping with the April 22, 2020 Order of the S.C. Supreme Court<sup>1</sup> regarding the operation of trial courts during the Coronavirus.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency departments and/or in-patient facilities treating Greenville County residents received the originals of involuntary commitment documents from the Greenville County Probate Court office. However, due to COVID-19, electronic transmission of these documents has been implemented to protect public health. Because this practice deviates from the long standing process prior to the pandemic, some staff members in facilities outside of Greenville County have expressed concern regarding the appropriateness of accepting electronically transmitted commitment documents such as the *Application for Involuntary Emergency Hospitalization for Mental Illness / Chemical Dependency* and *Certification of a Licensed Physician*. This Administrative Order is issued in response to these concerns.

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

Emergency department staff or psychiatric facilities' staff treating Greenville County residents shall accept and process all electronically transmitted civil commitment documents received from the Civil Commitment Division of the Greenville County Probate Court via secure email as if they were original documents. Transmitted documents shall be treated as filed on the date and time sent by the Court. Transmitted documents shall be treated as filed on the date and time received by the Court if documents are sent to the Court via electronic transmission from a facility;

This procedure satisfies all legal requirements while allowing for the prompt treatment of the patient during this public health emergency;

The above procedure is in keeping with the S.C. Supreme Court Order regarding the *Operation of Trial Courts during the Coronavirus Emergency*.

Staff members of any facility with questions may contact the Greenville County Probate Court Civil Commitment staff for assistance as follows: Tammy Douglas, Deputy Probate Judge at [tdouglas@greenvillecounty.org](mailto:tdouglas@greenvillecounty.org), 864.467.7085; or, Hope Barton, Deputy Probate Judge at [hbarton@greenvillecounty.org](mailto:hbarton@greenvillecounty.org), 864-467-7172.

This Order may be amended as necessary and appropriate.

June 11, 2020  
Greenville, SC

  
Debora A. Faulkner, Probate Judge

<sup>1</sup> S.C. Supreme Court Order issued on April 22, 2020 entitled, *Operation of Trial Courts during the Coronavirus Emergency*, Appellate Case No. 2020-000447.