



# Sequoyah Adolescent Treatment Center

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NEW MEXICO  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**

## **Sequoyah Adolescent Treatment Center**

### **History**

Sequoyah has been providing treatment services to adolescents since July 1, 1992 when the center was officially transferred from the New Mexico Youth Authority to the New Mexico Department of Health. Historically, Sequoyah (originally called Secure Treatment Center) was conceived in July 1982, as a psychiatric hospital for adolescent clients who could not be treated in a traditional psychiatric facility because of their violence and resulting in disruption to the rest of the unit. Funds were appropriated to build the center in 1984, but did not include funding for staff. Thus, the Secure Treatment Center did not open until 1990 when the New Mexico Youth Authority used it as a nine-bed treatment center for juvenile delinquents. Community needs, as expressed through the legislature, suggested the need to open the center to both adjudicated and non-adjudicated youth. As a result, the legislature formally transferred the center to the Department of Health, Division of Mental Health, effected July 1, 1992. Admission standards were changed, treatment rather than incarceration became the primary purpose and the center was officially opened as Sequoyah Adolescent Treatment Center. In the ensuing years, it expanded from the original nine beds to full capacity with 36 beds.

### **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Sequoyah Adolescent Treatment Center is to provide care and reintegration into society for adolescents who are violent or who have a history of violence, have a mental disorder, and who are amenable to treatment. The purpose is to also to provide a residential treatment program for adolescents with severe emotional disturbances for the purpose of developing skills necessary for successful transition into the community. Services are to be provided based upon a client's needs and integrated within the continuum of services offered throughout the state. Provision of services is consistent with the least restrictive means principle.

## **Sequoyah Adolescent Treatment Center Admission Criteria**

1. The adolescent must be violent or have a history of violence, have a mental disorder, and be amenable to treatment.
2. The adolescent must have a serious emotional disturbance, as adopted by the state mental health authority.
3. If the adolescent and his family do not consent to voluntary treatment, then the adolescent must meet criteria for commitment under the Children's Mental Health and Development Disabilities Code (Section 32A-6-1, NMSA 1993.)
  - a. The adolescent has a mental disorder. It is substantial disorder of emotional process, thought or cognition, which grossly impairs his judgment, behavior, or capacity to recognize reality. Such disorders will frequently be of a psychotic nature or an effective disorder.
  - b. The adolescent needs and is likely to benefit from treatment at Sequoyah.
  - c. Treatment at Sequoyah is consistent with the least drastic means principle. Such adolescents will often have a history of repeated acts of violence, which either injured or endangered themselves or others. Less drastic treatment has either failed or been judged too risky.
4. The adolescent must be between thirteen (13) and seventeen (17) years of age. Exceptions may be made for twelve (12) year olds based on an evaluation indicating that the referred adolescent is functioning at an appropriate developmental level and would benefit from a program designed primarily to address adolescent issues.
5. The adolescent must have the cognitive capacity to benefit from verbal therapies and milieu programming offered at Sequoyah. Normally this would mean intellectual functioning at least within the borderline range. However, exceptions may be made, especially when it is judged that the child would be appropriate for a neuropsychiatric unit.
6. Preference will be given to New Mexico residents.
7. Sequoyah is an intermediate care facility and it is expected that residents are likely to complete their treatment in three to six months after admission, and be ready to transfer to a less restrictive setting.

8. Need for services is the primary consideration and services are offered without discrimination by reason of race, sexual performance, religion, national origin, or ability to pay.
9. Sequoyah may not exclude from consideration adolescents in the custody of other agencies who might otherwise meet criteria for services.
10. It is the right of Sequoyah to determine the appropriateness of applicants and the order of admission.
11. Sequoyah is **not** a forensic unit. Clients cannot be ordered here under criminal or delinquency codes and Sequoyah staff does not do evaluations for competency or to determine whether a client was insane at the time of the crime. Further, we consider the child and his family to be our clients and will **not** release information concerning his case in accordance with the NM Children's Mental Health Code and HIPPA regulations.

## Neuropsychiatric Unit Admission Criteria

Must meet SATC admission requirements

History of violence or aggression

Substantial diagnosed mental health disorder

Have a neurological problem/brain injury or impairment contributing to behavioral and/or psychiatric difficulties.

### **Neuropsychological indicators include:**

Abnormal neurological or neuropsychological assessments – EEG, MRI, other objectives testing

Differences in verbal and performance IQ scores – spread of 15 points or greater

History of significant head injury or trauma

Early substance abuse (age 13 or younger), especially use of inhalants; also, fetal exposure to alcohol or drugs.

Early, progressive serious behavior problems combined with academic problems/failure

Communication difficulties

### **Other Behavioral Signs or Symptoms**

Processing difficulties – can't make goals or plan actions to carry out; difficulty with initiating and stopping behavior

Cognitive and memory deficits – easily distracted, unable to filter out stimuli or pay attention to multiple tasks, needs simple instructions and frequent repetition

Frequently presents as irritable, apathetic or anxious/excessive worrying

Unable to understand cues – inappropriate social interactions and behavior

Impulsive, poor judgment, rigid thinking, does not appear to learn from mistakes

## Referral Packets

When making a referral to Sequoyah, please include the following documents:

Psychological Evaluation (including Forensic evaluations if done)

Chronological Offense Records

Judgment and Disposition orders

Educational Assessments (including transcripts, IEPs, psycho educational assessments, speech and language evaluations)

Medication information

JJD Baseline assessments

Information from previous placements/hospitalizations

Medicaid or insurance information

Immunization record

A cover letter describing why this adolescent is being referred at this time

**All referrals need to include: current location of the referee, custody, parents' address and phone number, name and phone number of the person making referral, JPPO name and number.**

