**Section 125.10 Purpose**

a) The intent of this Part is to define and describe the role of the Department of Human Services once the decision has been made by direct service personnel that a recipient is a candidate for discharge from a State-operated facility. A person shall not remain in a State-operated facility after it has been clinically and professionally determined that therapeutic services as defined within the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code [405 ILCS 5] are no longer needed by the recipient. Adequate discharge planning, linkage and aftercare within an appropriate setting with individualized follow-up services will be provided for each recipient. Recipients will not be discharged from State-operated facilities without assurance that linkage will occur, unless the recipient refuses individualized follow-up services.

b) The policies and procedures within this document are consistent with the statutes which contain the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code and the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Administrative Act [20 ILCS 1705] and provide uniform direction to Department employees beginning with the decision to discharge a recipient and continuing through the follow-up process. The approach contained in this Part should enhance the quality of delivery of services to recipients and provide for improved public accountability.

c) This Part shall be used to assist in the orientation and training of staff as well as to provide guidance which may be necessary on a day-to-day basis. It is written in such a way that the policy expectations of the Department in terms of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the discharge/linkage/aftercare process are addressed, including:

1) Central Office personnel;

2) Department facility and regional personnel;

3) Follow-up staff; and

4) Community providers.

d) The Department has always placed a special emphasis upon the necessity of continuity of care among service providers. Evidence of collaborative interagency agreements which assure prompt access to needed services is a requirement for the receipt of Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities grant funds. Nationally recognized accreditation organizations have also emphasized the importance of this area through the development of standards concerning discharge planning, linkage and aftercare services.

e) The programmatic issue of assuring linkage of a recipient of services to the receiving agency/facility as distinguished from the monitoring and tracking of the recipient through the system has been given special consideration. Consequently, the Department's primary emphasis is to assure this linkage. The contents of this Part reflect this emphasis.

f) The provision and delivery of aftercare services to the recipient are the responsibility of the receiving agency/facility. The assurance that the services are appropriate and continue to be provided are the responsibility of the case coordinator and/or the designated mandated follow-up staff.

g) Facilitating the linkage of each recipient to a receiving agency while at the same time respecting the individual's rights as set forth in the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act [740 ILCS 110] requires that any recipient identifying information contained in the Department's automated linkage system be maintained on a time limited basis. Confirmation of linkage for a time period, not exceeding 180 days from the date of absolute discharge from a state-operated facility is maintained in the automated linkage system. An exception to this practice will exist for those recipients placed by the Department into licensed long-term care facilities. In these cases, the Department will maintain recipient identifying information for a minimum of one year in order to fulfill the mandated follow-up responsibility specified in Sections 15 through 16 of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Administrative Act [20 ILCS 1705/15 through 16].

h) The policies and procedures contained in this Part articulate specific activities which must be accomplished. Further, terminology used in this Part has been standardized to facilitate its usefulness as well as gain greater clarity in communications among responsible personnel.