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**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** CIU  
**FROM:** WALTER LAUX  
**SUBJECT:** RESIDENTIAL INTERIM LEVEL OF CARE  
**DATE:** 2/15/2007  
**CC:**

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Effective immediately, Milwaukee County will no longer be using interim placements for clients whose initial level of care (LOC) determination during the CIU screen is for residential treatment. Said clients will be placed on a waitlist for residential treatment only, and will not receive a RSC until such time that they enter residential treatment. The clients do not have the option to choose a lower LOC.

This is based on clinical concerns. The published ASAM text states:  
"Referral to a specific level of care must be based on a careful assessment of the patient with alcohol or other drug dependence problem. The goal that underlies the criteria is the placement of the patient in the most appropriate level of care. For both clinical and financial reasons, the preferred level of care is the least intensive level that meets treatment objectives, while providing safety and security for the patient." (ASAM PPC-2R, pp. 15-16)  
For residential services, the ASAM notes "treatment is directed toward ameliorating their deficits through targeted interventions... This treatment is accomplished by providing specialty modalities and skills training while the resident is in a safe and structured environment, thus providing an opportunity for continued improvement. Because treatment plans are individualized, fixed lengths of stay are inappropriate." (p. 75)

Hence, choosing an interim lower LOC for clients whose initial determination is residential does not meet the clinical needs of the client as they wait for placement in a residential service. A service provider in a lower LOC is unable to provide a safe and structured environment around the clock. Outcome data collected by BHD over the last 17 months supports this assertion. Individuals referred to a lower LOC as an interim placement while waiting for residential treatment have poorer outcomes associated with the lower LOC. Furthermore, the liability implications for the service provider at the lower LOC could be construed as greater because the ASAM placement criteria determined a higher placement decision. Therefore, BHD will no longer use interim placements for clients whose ASAM determination is for residential treatment.