



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

ALISON G. LAND, FACHE
COMMISSIONER

DEPARTMENT OF
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Post Office Box 1797
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1797

Telephone (804) 786-3921
Fax (804) 371-6638
www.dbhds.virginia.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: All DBHDS Licensed Providers

From: Jae Benz, Director, DBHDS Office of Licensing

Date: October 6, 2021

Re: **Exciting News – A New DBHDS Licensing System Goes Live on November 3, 2021 and Resulting Operational Changes**

Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the go live date for the new DBHDS Office of Licensing (OL) system, CONNECT; explain the high level rollout plan for licensed providers; and to inform providers of upcoming operational changes within the Office of Licensing.

While it has been some time since we announced the DBHDS technology initiative to replace the current licensing system, OLIS, we are pleased to announce that CONNECT is scheduled to go live November 3, 2021.

The goal of the CONNECT system, once implemented, is to provide a Web Portal that will increase efficiency for providers and the Office of Licensing. The Web Portal will allow providers to electronically submit all required paperwork such as initial applications, license renewal applications, service modifications, corrective action plans (CAPs) and variances. CONNECT is automated with specific workflows which will expedite and streamline the licensing processes and improve the transparency of data and communication with Office of Licensing staff, providing real-time information exchange and 24/7 account access. It will be self-service and paperless for providers and deliver automated notifications of license renewals and other time-sensitive transactions. Providers can upload documentation with immediate alerts generated to the Office of Licensing staff. Lastly, CONNECT will allow the Office of Licensing to address concerns from the provider community particularly related to progressive actions for serious incident reporting. This new system will allow the Office to determine progressive citations based on the percentage of late reporting incidents over the provider's total number of incident reports.

As stated above, as part of the new CONNECT system, the Office of Licensing is going paperless! Within CONNECT there is a portal interface for licensed providers that offers online access to provider licensing data. In addition, providers will be able to communicate with their Licensing Specialist; submit renewals and service modifications without sending in paper applications; and will have full online access to all issued licensing reports and corrective action plans.

Effective October 18th, the Office of Licensing will no longer accept any paper service modifications, renewal applications or initial applications. Paper service modifications, renewal applications, and initial applications received prior to 5:00 PM on October 18 will be processed. Any paper service modifications, renewal applications, or initial applications received after 5:00 PM on October 18 will be sent back to the provider and will not be processed.

Mandatory Training

All providers will be required to participate in an introductory training webinar to learn more about CONNECT and how to register in the CONNECT Provider Portal. The first of several CONNECT Provider Portal Training Webinars will be held on November 4, 9, and 10. Licensed Providers are required to attend one of the three scheduled webinars. The invitation to register for the CONNECT Provider Portal training will be sent through Constant Contact.

Additional Details about the Benefits and Features of the CONNECT Provider Portal:

- **Licensed Provider Dashboard** – The dashboard is the main page for providers to access everything they need regarding licensed services. From the dashboard, providers will have access to “provider inquiry” tools to communicate online with the Office of Licensing.
- **Managing Users** – We expect that each provider organization may have additional users beyond the Owner(s)/Main Authorized Contacts. Once the Owner(s)/Main Authorized Contacts register to access CONNECT, providers will be able to manage additional authorized users within the licensed organization and give specialized access to those responsible for various functions in the organization. For example, coordinating background checks, submitting modifications, submitting renewals, and responding to licensing reports with Corrective Actions Plans (CAPs).
- **Background Checks** – Providers will set up the organization’s background check contacts; view the criminal background check status; receive eligibility status via email; and have the ability to print a copy of the eligibility letter, if needed. Only those individuals assigned as background check contacts will be able to view any background check information in CONNECT.
- **License Renewals** – Providers will be able to directly submit renewal applications in the CONNECT Provider Portal which will then send a notification that the renewal has been received in real time.
- **Service Modifications** – Providers will be able to directly submit modification applications in the CONNECT Provider Portal which will then send a notification that the application has been received in real time.
- **Corrective Action Plans (CAPs)** – Providers will now have the ability to receive and respond to licensing reports directly through the CONNECT Provider Portal.

OL Operational Changes:

While we are very excited for the rollout of CONNECT, the transition to this new system will require significant staff training to ensure a timely and smooth transition for providers. In fact, the CONNECT transition will require the full focus of all licensing staff in the months to come. During this time, daily activities for the Office of Licensing will be performed at a much slower pace as both licensing staff and providers become acquainted with the new system. In order to accommodate this transition and to complete other requirements mandated by the Code of Virginia, the Office of Licensing will be implementing the following operational changes.

Temporary Operational Changes through June 30, 2022:

1) ASAM Licenses:

- The Office of Licensing will be issuing a second conditional license to all ASAM and July 1 Project Bravo service licenses.
- Providers will be required to submit an attestation of compliance with all relevant regulations as part of their renewal application, as was required with the July 1 service modification applications.
- Due to limited staff time, Licensing Specialists will not be conducting onsite visits prior to the issuance of a second conditional license, unless there are specific concerns related to the provision of services.
- The Office of Licensing will work with DMAS and the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to ensure all relevant parties understand the issuance of a second conditional license is in no way a punitive action. ASAM service providers who wish to add an additional service location while on a conditional service license should reach out directly to their assigned Licensing Specialist.
- Additional information regarding the renewal process for the ASAM and July 1 Project Bravo services will be sent in the future as we approach the January 1, 2021 expiration date.

2) Service Modifications:

- If a provider submits an incomplete service modification form or does not include all necessary documents, prior to the CONNECT go-live date, the service modification will be sent back to the provider. The Licensing Specialist will not hold on to or review incomplete service modification packets.
- Paper applications for service modifications will not be accepted after October 18, as all modification applications will need to be submitted through CONNECT.
- In order to save travel time, Licensing Specialists will continue to conduct virtual inspections for service modifications for any providers where there are not concerns based on the provider's previous compliance history.
- The Office of Licensing will continue to prioritize processing service modifications for priority services. The Office of Licensing is in the process of developing an "imminent need" exception process for service modifications for the Commissioner's review, so applications for lower priority services can receive a timely review should the provider believe they have an imminent need to add a service or location for a service. Please note Licensing Specialists may not be able to review these modification applications within 30 business days or schedule a physical site review within 60 business days from the receipt of the completed modification application due to existing time restraints, particularly for services which are not at the top of the priority list.

Service modification applications to add services or locations for the following services will continue to be processed in the following order:

1. Residential Crisis Stabilization
2. Nonresidential Crisis Stabilization
 - a. Mobile crisis
 - b. 23 hour crisis stabilization
 - c. Community based crisis stabilization
3. Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
4. Inpatient Psychiatric Unit
5. Medically Monitored Intensive Inpatient Treatment
6. Substance Abuse Residential Services for Adults
 - a. Clinically managed high intensity residential care

- b. Clinically managed low-intensity residential care
 - c. Specific high intensity residential
 - 7. Substance Abuse Residential Services for Children:
 - a. Clinically managed low-intensity residential care
 - b. Clinically managed medium-intensity residential care
 - 8. Medication Assisted Opioid Treatment
 - 9. Day Treatment/Support
 - a. Substance abuse partial hospitalization
 - b. Substance abuse intensive outpatient
 - c. Substance abuse outpatient
 - d. Mental health partial hospitalization
 - e. Mental health intensive outpatient
 - f. Mental health outpatient (for providers credential in FFT)
 - 10. Intensive In home (for providers credentialed in MST)
 - 11. DD Sponsored residential (only if sponsored provider has an identified a specific individual in need of immediate sponsored placement)
 - 12. DD Supportive In home – new providers in areas where there are not currently sufficient providers or expertise
 - 13. DD Sponsored residential (only if sponsored provider has an identified a specific individual in need of immediate sponsored placement) Will put into admin process to consult with Regional Manager for specific services based on need.
 - 14. Children’s Residential Services
 - 15. DD Day support
 - 16. DD Group home
 - 17. TDT school based and after school
 - 18. Mental Health Skill Building
 - 19. Psychosocial Rehabilitation
 - 20. DD/ICF
 - 21. MH Group home
- ** Modification requests made in accordance with the Appropriation Act, 2021 Special Session II (Chapter 1 of the Acts of Assembly) will be prioritized and processed as required by law.

Permanent Operational Changes:

In addition to the changes noted above, the Office of Licensing will also be making a permanent change to the Care Concern triggers and thresholds to better align with the Risk Awareness Tool and to reduce the number of concerns identified that do not require additional remediation.

- 1) **Care concerns:** The Office of Licensing will be reducing the number of care concern threshold categories for review from five to two. The two remaining care concern categories to be monitored will include:
 - Multiple (two or more) unplanned hospital visits for a serious incident including: falls, choking, urinary tract infection, aspiration pneumonia, dehydration, or seizures within a ninety (90) day time-frame for any reason; and
 - Any incidents of a decubitus ulcer diagnosed by a medical professional, an increase in the severity level of a previously diagnosed decubitus ulcer, or a diagnosis of a bowel obstruction diagnosed by a medical professional.

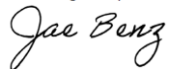
The DBHDS Incident Management Unit (IMU) will triage any incidents that fall into these two care concern categories to the Office of Human Rights (OHR) and/or Office of Integrated Health (OIH) for review and follow up. Incident reports designated as care concerns will only be triaged to the assigned Licensing Specialist for investigation if the IMU determines from a review of the

incident report that individuals served may be at an imminent risk of harm or if there are any outstanding regulatory concerns after the OHR/OIH review is complete

Please note, as with any large state-level system change, there will be challenges. We can assure you our staff will be working diligently to identify and resolve issues as quickly as possible. The Office of Licensing greatly appreciates your patience and understanding as we navigate through the initial phase of this exciting new chapter. We are confident our new system will allow us better serve our providers and the individuals they serve. We look forward to working with you.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this letter, please reach out directly to your Licensing Specialist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jae Benz".

Jae Benz, Director
Office of Licensing
DBHDS