



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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MEMORANDUM

To: All DBHDS Licensed Providers

From: Jae Benz, Director, Office of Licensing

Date: August 8, 2019

Re: Restructuring within the Office of Licensing

The purpose of this memo is to inform all licensed providers of additional exciting changes occurring within the DBHDS Office of Licensing.

Beginning August 10, Veronica Davis will step into a new role as Associate Director of State Operations. As Associate Director of State Operations, Veronica will work alongside the Director of Licensing to develop and coordinate the oversight of licensed providers throughout all 5 regions. She will be working with the licensing team to develop both provider training and technical assistance training for staff related to the implementation and monitoring of regulations. In addition, she will conduct risk management and quality improvement activities; provide input into recommendations for licensing actions; and fully support state initiatives related to the Commonwealth's Settlement Agreement with the United States Department of Justice and behavioral health redesign. I believe that by having one Associate Director over all of the regions, there will be increased consistency in how staff members are trained, regulations are interpreted, trainings conducted and providers are supported.

The second Associate Director position has been revamped to be the Associate Director for Licensing, Quality, Regulatory Compliance, and training. This position will be responsible for ensuring that regulations are applied accurately and consistently across the office by all licensing specialists in all regions. In addition, they will be responsible for developing and delivering trainings to providers and staff; updating and promulgating up to date guidance and FAQs; conducting studies and research to improve service quality; and driving quality improvement initiatives. I will be providing additional information related to this position in the upcoming weeks once it has been filled.

Lastly, the Office of Licensing is in the process of developing a specialized Investigation Unit or "IVU." The IVU will include seven investigation specialists divided among regions as follows:

- Region 1: One investigator
- Region 2: One investigator
- Region 3: One investigator

Region 4: Two investigators
Region 5: Two investigators

The IVU's responsibilities will initially include conducting all developmental disability ("DD") death investigations, DD complaint investigations, and major DD serious incident investigations. The purpose of the IVU will be to ensure that the Office of Licensing conducts fair and thorough investigations that ensure the health and safety of individuals. The IVU will help ensure that developmental disability investigations are conducted in accordance with departmental protocols and will help promote consistency regarding the investigation process. The ultimate goal for the Office of Licensing is for the IVU to conduct all investigations for every licensed service. However, we understand that transitioning to this process will take time and may require additional resources. Therefore, to begin with, the IVU process will be implemented in the following 3 phases:

Phase 1: Completion of all DD Death Investigations;
Phase 2: Completion of all DD Complaint Investigations, rolled out by region; and
Phase 3: Completion of all DD Serious Incident Investigations, rolled out by region.

Implementing the IVU in the above stated phases will allow time to determine if it is feasible for regions in which one investigator is assigned to successfully manage the workload of all DD deaths, complaints, and serious incident investigations. These phases will allow the Office of Licensing to develop processes that are functional and will achieve desired outcomes. In addition, phasing in the IVU will also give time to address challenges and ensure successful implementation throughout the Commonwealth.

Please note that while providers are now required to submit all Mortality Review documents as stated in the [Mortality Review Committee Required Documentation and Timeframe for Submission memo](#), IVU specialists may still request any documentation required for completion of their investigations at any time. The Office of Licensing looks forward to continuing to work with providers to improve our system. For any questions regarding the IVU, please contact Angelica Howard, Investigation Manager, at angelica.howard@dbhds.virginia.gov.

If you have any questions related to this memo, please feel free to e-mail me at Jae.Benz@dbhds.virginia.gov. If you have not already, I also encourage you to read the [July 10, 2019 memo](#) from the Office of Licensing announcing the Office of Licensing's new Incident Management Unit.

Sincerely,

Jae Benz

Jae Benz
Director, Office of Licensing
DBHDS