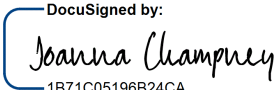


Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<u>POLICY TITLE:</u> DSAMH Incident Notification Policy	<u>POLICY #:</u> DSAMH041
<u>PREPARED BY:</u> Policy and Compliance	<u>DATE ISSUED:</u> 08/05/2022
<u>RELATED POLICIES:</u> DSAMH042 Staff Safety DSAMH029 Incident Reporting DSAMH016 Community Risk Management	<u>REFERENCE:</u> PM46 PM83 DHSS Incident Report DSAMH Incident Reporting Form (DSAMH029A)
<u>DATES REVIEWED:</u> 08/05/2022 08/30/2023 10/21/2024 07/17/2025 10/09/2025	<u>DATES REVISED:</u> 08/02/2023 08/28/2024 07/09/2025 09/15/2025
<u>APPROVED BY:</u>  <u>DATE APPROVED:</u> 10/15/2025 7:50 AM PDT	<u>NOTES:</u> ☒ DSAMH Internal Policy ☒ DSAMH Operated Program ☐ DSAMH State Providers ☐ Delaware Psychiatric Center ☐ Targeted Use Policy (Defined in scope)

I. **PURPOSE:**

This policy addresses incidents that occur in DSAMH-operated programs. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to ensure a proper timeline and escalation is defined for all DSAMH staff and contracted workers.

II. **POLICY STATEMENT:**

To establish a policy for DSAMH-operated programs' staff and contracted workers to properly notify the DSAMH leadership of incidents in a timely manner.

III. **DEFINITIONS:**

"Critical incident" means an actual or alleged event resulting in the abuse, death, exploitation, neglect, restrictive intervention, or serious injury of a client. See DSAMH029 for more detail on Critical Incidents.

"DHSS reportable incident" means an event or occurrence that interrupts daily operations and impacts the safety and well-being of DHSS employee(s), customer(s), or property.

“DSAMH staff” means any staff, contracted workers, or employees working within a DSAMH-operated program.

“DSAMH-operated programs” means programs such as Bridge Clinics, Promoting Optimal Mental Health for Individuals through Supports and Empowerment (PROMISE), Crisis Intervention Services (CIS), Treatment Access Center (TASC), Transitional Case Management (TCM) and SUD Care Navigators.

“General incident” means any event, not considered a critical incident, that adversely affects the client. A general incident may be elevated to critical incident status. See DSAMH029.

“Newsworthy incident” means an event that may be or is being reported by news outlets, this may include social media outlets, or high-profile public incidents that may jeopardize community confidence in the public health system.

“PM46” means Policy Memorandum 46. PM46 relates to reporting and investigating critical incidents of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation. PM46 applies to employees and contractors of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS), Division of Health Care Quality (DHCQ), Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH), and Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD).

“Significant workplace event” means any event that may cause harm to staff or impede the ability to work, including structural damage, staff physical altercations, threats of physical harm between staff, or other unforeseen circumstances.

IV. **SCOPE:** This policy applies to all DSAMH staff who provide services to clients in DSAMH-operated programs. This policy extends to individuals assigned to DSAMH sites, such as agency contracted workers, including all administrators, clinicians, other employees, subcontractors, and volunteers. Any new direct care services offered by DSAMH are also required to adhere to this policy.

V. **PROCEDURES/RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A. The DSAMH incident escalation chart in appendix A shall be posted by program supervisors in areas for DSAMH staff to see.

B. All new DSAMH staff shall be trained on this policy within thirty (30) days of hire, and annually.

C. General Incident Escalation:

1. If a general incident occurs, a staff member who saw or was involved in the general incident shall inform their supervisor of the incident prior to the end of their shift.
 - a. If a staff member is unsure whether to escalate an incident notification, the staff member should report to their immediate supervisor.
2. The staff member witnessing the event shall complete a DSAMH General Incident Report utilizing the most current Division-approved procedure. See DSAMH029.
3. Once the supervisor has been notified, the supervisor shall inform their Bureau Chief of the general incident within one (1) business day.
4. The DSAMH Director shall be informed by the Bureau Chief within one (1) business day.

D. Critical Incident, Newsworthy Incident, or PM46 Escalation:

1. Reporters are required to first ensure the physical and emotional well-being, safety, and needs of the individual are addressed before initiating any related reporting.
 2. A staff member involved or another staff member who saw the incident shall immediately inform their supervisor.
 - a. If a staff member is unsure whether to escalate an incident notification, the staff member should report to their immediate supervisor.
 3. The staff member witnessing the event shall complete the DSAMH Critical Incident Report utilizing the most current Division-approved procedure within twenty-four (24) hours of discovery (if required by DSAMH029).
 4. The supervisor shall immediately inform their Bureau Chief of the incident.
 5. If the incident is deemed newsworthy by the Bureau Chief, then they shall immediately inform the DSAMH Director.
 6. If the incident is a critical incident, or PM46, and deemed not newsworthy, then the Bureau Chief shall inform the DSAMH Director within one (1) business day.
- E. General Workplace Event Escalation:
1. If a general workplace event occurs, staff should follow the general incident notification process (see above in section V.C).
 2. Types of general workplace events include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Verbal altercations between staff,
 - b. Interruptions in utilities for less than four (4) hours,
 - c. Minor damage to facility (hole in drywall, etc.), or
 - d. Facility early closure not due to weather.
- F. Significant Workplace Event Escalation:
1. If a significant workplace event occurs, staff should follow the critical incident notification process (see above in section V.D).
 2. Types of significant workplace events include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Staff death,
 - b. Fire or smoke in the facility,
 - c. Major disturbances to the facility's ability to operate (power outages lasting four hours or more, damage to the facility, etc.),
 - d. Staff member identifies a weapon or firearm in possession of a client,
 - e. Assault on staff by client(s),
 - f. Physical altercations between staff, or
 - g. Other events deemed significant at the discretion of the Bureau Chief.
- G. DHSS Reportable Incidents:
1. Certain incident types included in V.E and V.F are also considered DHSS reportable incidents. In addition to the reporting requirements in V.E and V.F, staff are to complete a DHSS Reportable Incident form.
 2. DHSS reportable incidents include, but not limited to:
 - a. Injuries/falls/accidents that occur in the workplace and/or while conducting DHSS business,
 - i. If an employee is involved in an accident in the workplace, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) Injury/Illness Report must be completed. If the injury results from a larger incident, the employee can opt to complete the DHSS Incident Report in

addition to the DHR Injury/Illness Report. However, if the entire incident can be summarized within the DHR Injury/Illness Report, a copy of that report can be forwarded to the DHSS Chief of Staff as required under PM83.

- b. Any identified security risk or suspicious activity/occurrence,
 - c. Any actual fire or any unplanned smoke alarm,
 - d. Any security alarm being activated,
 - e. Any call for ambulance or police including use of a panic button,
 - f. Any threat or risk of harm or physical threat by an individual (this includes threats made in person, via phone or virtual meeting, and via electronic messages),
 - g. Any altercation between employees that results in harm or threat of harm,
 - h. Any building or maintenance issue that results in harm to an employee or visitor,
 - j. Any significant damage to State or personal property that requires a maintenance call or repairs, or
 - k. Any theft of State or personal property.
2. DHSS reportable incidents must be reported via the DHSS Incident Report form following PM83 within three (3) business days of the incident. The web-based reporting form must not be used as it bypasses the review by the Director.
- a. All DSAMH DHSS incident reports must be approved by Division Director Champney before submission.
 - b. Reports should be sent to:
 - i. Director Champney at Joanna.Champney@Delaware.Gov
 - ii. Chief of Staff Martina Johnson at Martina.Johnson@Delaware.Gov.
 - c. The DSAMH Division Director or the Chief of Staff will forward approved reports to the DHSS Chief of Staff via email at DHSS_Incident_Report@delaware.gov.
 - d. Submitting an incident report under PM#83 does not replace other reporting requirements for programs.

B. Table of Events:

Event	Category	Notification Timeline
Hospitalization of client	General Incident	Staff notifies supervisor during shift and completes the incident report Supervisor notifies Bureau Chief within 1 business day Bureau Chief notifies DSAMH Director when deemed necessary
Arrest of client	General Incident	
Destruction of property by client	General Incident	
Adverse reactions to medication	General Incident	
Use of restrictive interventions	General Incident	
Self-injurious behaviors	General Incident	
Medication refusals over a period of time	General Incident	
Behavior with potential to involve legal system	General Incident	Staff notifies supervisor immediately and completes incident report Supervisor notifies Bureau chief immediately Bureau Chief notifies DSAMH Director within one (1) business day If incident is deemed newsworthy Bureau Chief notifies DSAMH Director immediately
Suspected client abuse	PM 46	
Suspected client neglect	PM 46	
Financial exploitation	PM 46	
Death of client	Critical Incident	
Death of Group Home client	PM 65	
Severe injury requiring treatment by medical professional	Critical Incident	
Suspected medication diversion	Critical Incident	
Suicide attempt	Critical Incident	
Elopement	Critical Incident	
Poisoning resulting in medical injury	Critical Incident	
Restrictive intervention resulting in injury	Critical Incident	
Verbal altercations between staff*	General Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	Staff notifies supervisor during shift Supervisor notifies Bureau Chief within one (1) business day Bureau Chief notifies DSAMH Director within one (1) business day *Complete DHSS Incident Report within 3 Days
Interruptions in utilities for less than four (4) hours*	General Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	
Minor damage to facility*	General Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	
Facility early closure not due to weather*	General Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	
Staff death	Significant Workplace Event	Staff notifies supervisor immediately Supervisor notifies Bureau chief immediately Bureau Chief notifies DSAMH Director within one (1) business day If event is deemed newsworthy Bureau Chief notifies DSAMH Director immediately *Complete DHSS Incident Report within 3 Days
Fire or smoke in the facility*	Significant Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	
Major disturbances to the facility's ability to operate *	Significant Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	
Client possession of weapon/firearm*	Significant Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	

Assault on staff by client(s)*	Significant Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	
Physical altercations between staff*	Significant Workplace Event and DHSS Reportable Incident	
Workplace injuries, falls, or accidents (note: DHR Injury/Illness Report also required)	DHSS Reportable Incident	Staff notifies supervisor immediately DHR Injury/Illness Report completed immediately *Complete DHSS Incident Report within 3 Days

3. POLICY LIFESPAN: This policy shall be reviewed annually by the policy committee.

4. RESOURCES:

- A. Incident Notification Escalation in Appendix A
- B. [Incident Reporting](#)

Appendix A:

Incident Reporting Escalation

