



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

NELSON SMITH  
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](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov)

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** All DBHDS Licensed Providers

**From:** Jae Benz, Director, DBHDS Office of Licensing

**Date:** February 14, 2023

**Re: Operational Changes related to Care Concerns**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this memorandum is to inform providers of upcoming operational changes within the Office of Licensing related to the Care Concern Thresholds criteria monitoring.

**Operational Changes:** Effective January 1, 2023, the Office of Licensing will be making a change to the Care Concern Thresholds criteria, also known as uniform risk triggers and thresholds, based on data review and recommendations.

In October 2021, the Care Concern Criteria was revised to align with the Risk Awareness Tool (RAT). The annual RAT review is used to identify potential indicators of risk and to ensure a meaningful discussion between the individual and their support system as part of the Individualized Service Plan review and update. However, there may be changes in the medical, psychiatric, behavioral, or other status of the individual throughout the year which requires a provider to evaluate an individual's care.

One way for a provider, as well as the Department, to determine if there has been a potentially significant change is to monitor key risk triggers and thresholds. The Department has defined uniform risk triggers and thresholds as care concerns. The Care Concern Thresholds are reviewed annually by the DBHDS Risk Management Review Committee. Based on feedback from the Committee, as well as from the Independent Reviewer and Department of Justice, the list of Care Concern Thresholds has been updated effective January 1, 2023. The Incident Management Unit (IMU) has been tasked as the unit within DBHDS to track care concern through the incident management process.

Following are the list of the revised Care Concerns:

- a. Multiple (Two or more) unplanned medical hospital admissions or ER visits for falls, urinary tract infection, aspiration pneumonia, dehydration, or seizures within a ninety (90) day time-frame for any reason.
- b. 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.

- c. Any choking incident that requires physical aid by another person, such as abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver), back blows, clearing of airway, or CPR.
- d. Multiple (Two or more) unplanned psychiatric admissions within a ninety (90) day time-frame for any reason.

The DBHDS IMU will triage incidents that fall into these four 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 imminent risk of harm or if there are any outstanding regulatory concerns after the OHR/OIH review is complete.

The IMU will continue to inform providers about incidents that meet the Care Concern Thresholds in the following ways:

- 1) Providers will be able to view IMU action as soon as the incident has been triaged. The actions will be captured in the "License Specialist Action" tab of CHRIS.
- 2) Providers will be able to generate CHRIS reports on incidents that have been identified as Care Concern Thresholds.

In addition, the Office of Licensing will continue to recommend providers take the following actions regarding incidents identified as meeting the Care Concern Thresholds criteria.

- 1) Determine the need to reassess the individuals' needs/services.
- 2) Identify possible systemic issues affecting provision of care through the following processes:
  - a. Quarterly reviews of all serious incidents pursuant to 12VAC35-105-160.C.;
  - b. Root cause analyses (RCA) for Level II serious incidents and any Level III serious incidents that occur during the provision of a service or on the provider's premises within 30 days of discovery pursuant to 12VAC-105-160.E.
  - c. Annual review and as needed systemic risk assessments pursuant to 12VAC35-105-520.C.; and
  - d. The use of standard quality improvement tools as part of their quality improvement program pursuant to 12VAC35-105-620.B.

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