



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

Developmental Disabilities Administration

Frank W. Kirkland, Executive Director

EDUCATIONAL ALERT

TO: DDA Licensed Service Providers
All Concerned

FROM: Frank W. Kirkland, Executive Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration
Dr. Tricia Nay, Acting Executive Director, Medical Director, Office of Health Care Quality

DATE: February 22, 2013

RE: Abuse Prevention

Over the past few weeks, the DDA and OHCQ have been made aware of several substantiated incidents of abuse of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Regulations¹ and statutes² currently require agencies to ensure that people supported are free from abuse and neglect. The purpose of this memo is to remind providers of this obligation. To ensure this fundamental right of being free from mental and physical abuse, agencies must train staff to understand and be able to identify the factors creating the potential for abuse. Providers should review their agency policies and procedures and consider:

- Does your agency provide training to staff regarding the definition of abuse?
- Does staff know how to identify abuse?
- If a staff member witnesses or suspects abuse, does he/she know whom to call and how to immediately contact an agency administrator to report the abuse?
- If a person receiving services from your agency is being abused, does he/she know whom to contact?
- Does your agency provide training to people with disabilities regarding abuse and whom to contact in case of abuse?
- Do your agency's practices make it easy for people receiving services to reach out to the administration and report abuse?
- Do your agency's routine quality assurance activities include personal contact with the people being served?

Toll Free 1-877-4MD-DHMH • TTY for Disabled - Maryland Relay Service 1-800-735-2258

Web Site: www.dhmh.state.md.us

¹ COMAR 10.22.02.10 A licensee shall develop and adopt written policies and procedures for ensuring: (2) Fundamental rights in accordance with Health General Article §7-1002, Annotated Code of Maryland;

² §7-1002. (b) It is the policy of this State that, in addition to any other rights, each individual who receives any services provided by the Administration or by a licensee has the following basic rights;... (3) The right to be free from mental and physical abuse;... (d) Each licensee shall:... (4) Provide appropriate staff training to carry out the policy.

DDA offers free training on a variety of topics. Information about upcoming training sessions and registration forms may be obtained by visiting the DDA website at <http://dda.dhmh.maryland.gov/SitePages/Training.aspx>.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. If you have questions, please contact Janet Furman, Acting Chief of Quality Assurance, DDA, at janet.furman@maryland.gov or 410-767-5929; or Jennifer Baker, DD Program Manager, OHCQ, at jennifer.baker@maryland.gov or 410-402-8100.