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To: Local Health Departments - Assessors and Nurse Monitors
Supports Planning Agencies

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Subject: Top 10 Tips for Effective Event Reporting in LTSSMaryland

Date: March 17, 2025

Top 10 Tips for Effective Event Reporting in LTSSMaryland

1. **Submit Reports Within Required Time Frames**

- **What to Do:** Submit event reports within three (3) business days of knowledge or discovery for non-Immediate Jeopardy (IJ) cases, and 24 hours for IJ.
- **Tip:** Set calendar reminders to ensure reports are submitted on time.
- **Why It Matters:** Timely reporting ensures that incidents are addressed quickly, meet compliance requirements, and safeguard participant well-being.

2. **Document Detailed Event Information (in the “Event Information” section of the RE)**

- **What to Do:** Include all critical details in the event report, such as who (was involved), what (happened), when, where (the event took place), and why. Record the names, titles, roles, and contact info for all witnesses and anyone directly involved.
- **Tip:** Write clear and concise descriptions. If unsure, over-document—additional information can always be edited later. Avoid jargon; aim for simple, yet descriptive language (e.g.,1: *“On Jan. 16, 2024, the participant passed away while receiving hospice care at Holy Cross Hosp.”* rather than *“Client passed away in December 2024.”* e.g.,2: *“SP called the family to follow up and left a callback message. SP will update progress notes once hearing from the family.”* rather than *“N/A”* or leaving the follow-up section empty).
- **Why It Matters:** Clear, concise, and accurate descriptions help the RE Unit quickly understand the incident/complaint context and severity. Complete documentation speeds up the review process and aids in collaboration with stakeholders.

3. Identify and Classify Events Correctly

- **What to Do:** As soon as you are aware of an event, quickly determine 1) if it's reportable, and 2) is it an incident, a complaint, or both. REs are only for participants, meaning applicants and other individuals adversely impacted are outside scope. As of January 1, 2025, emergency room visits and hospitalizations that are not preceded by another reportable event, are no longer reportable¹
- **Tip:** Incidents generally involve a direct adverse impact to participant health or safety (e.g., falls, abuse, medication errors), while complaints relate to participant concerns with program services and/or providers. A complaint about program services, which also has a direct adverse impact on the participant's health or safety, should be classified as both.
- **Why It Matters:** Accurate classification ensures timely and appropriate response and follow-up and helps avoid delays in addressing critical issues.

4. Use the "Urgent Request" Feature for IJ Events

- **What to Do:** When submitting the event report in LTSS*Maryland*, select "Urgent Request" for incidents with a serious risk of harm or death to the participant.
- **Tip:** Use this feature to prioritize cases needing immediate attention (e.g., abuse, neglect, exploitation); this triggers an alert for rapid RE Unit response.
- **Why it Matters:** Events posing an immediate threat should be flagged for urgent review to safeguard participant well-being. Reporters should also take immediate actions to protect participant(s) from further harm, including contacting law enforcement and/or Adult or Child Protective Services.

5. Review and Finalize Reports for Accuracy

- **What to Do:** Before finalizing the event report, review all sections for accuracy and completeness.
- **Tip:** Double-check for clarity, and verify that you've included all key details, such as the event date, parties involved, and follow-up actions. If possible, ask another staff member to review for clarity and completeness of information before submission.
- **Why It Matters:** Ensuring accuracy prevents the need for corrections later and helps speed up the review and resolution process.

6. Complete Intervention and Action Plan (IAP) Within 10 Business Days

- **What to Do:** After submitting the event report, promptly begin investigating the incident/complaint, taking immediate actions to safeguard the participant. Document initial findings, interventions, and follow-up steps as soon as possible, even if some details are missing. Additional information can be added later as a progress note.

¹ See memorandum titled "Change in Policy Concerning Reportable Events" dated December 26, 2024
Last Modified March 17, 2025

- **Tip:** Be clear about what actions were taken, by whom, and when to establish accountability. Break down actions into specific tasks with deadlines to reasonably resolve the issue and prevent recurrence.
- **Why it Matters:** Early intervention helps mitigate the impact of incidents and complaints, which improves outcomes.

7. Use a Root Cause Approach and Focus on Prevention

- **What to Do:** To reduce the likelihood of recurrence and improve outcomes, employ a root cause analysis and include preventive measures in the IAP (e.g., additional staff training, change in program services, revised care protocols, participant education).
- **Tip:** Think about what could be improved to prevent similar incidents and document these strategies clearly. Consider long-term solutions, not just immediate fixes, and focus on how these will be implemented. As applicable, collaborate with relevant stakeholders to enhance the IAP (e.g., work with Nurse Monitor to address concerns about poor quality personal assistance).
- **Why It Matters:** Using a root cause analysis and employing both short-term and long-term strategies reduces the likelihood of recurrence.

8. Collaborate and Communicate Regularly with the RE Unit

- **What to Do:** Start follow-up with the involved parties as soon as the event is reported. Use progress notes to document follow-up actions, clarify details, correct inaccuracies, and respond to any questions from the RE Unit within three (3) business days.
- **Tip:** Regularly check alerts in *LTSSMaryland* to ensure a prompt response. Ask the assigned reviewer for clarification if you don't understand what is being requested.
- **Why it Matters:** Progress notes allow continuous, clear communication among Support Planners, Nurse Monitors, and the RE Unit, even after the RE is closed. Clear communication ensures that everyone involved in the case is on the same page and helps resolve issues efficiently.

9. Document All Contact with External Agencies

- **What to Do:** In the "Contact Information" section of the event report, include details of any agency contacted. List all calls, emails, or visits with dates, times, and agency names.
- **Tip:** Record these interactions, even if no further action was needed, for transparency.
- **Why it Matters:** When incidents are critical (e.g., abuse, neglect, or exploitation), it's essential to record all interactions with external agencies to ensure proper investigation and follow-up. Documenting communication with external agencies creates a clear record of all actions taken and protects everyone involved.

10. Attach Supporting Documentation

- **What to Do:** Provide any available documentation as an attachment to the RE (e.g., medical records, incident reports from providers, police reports, death certificate) to create a complete picture of what occurred, the status of any investigations, and resulting outcomes.
- **Tip:** Prioritize source documents or information that is more detailed than that which is provided via the event report or IAP.
- **Why It Matters:** Supporting documents provide evidence and context, which can help clarify the situation and support the investigation.

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