



Sentinel Event Protocol

1. **Definition:** A sentinel event is an unexpected occurrence involving death, permanent harm, severe temporary harm, serious physical or psychological injury, or the risk thereof (CARF, December 2013). This is inclusive of children of parents/guardians receiving behavioral health treatment. Such events are called “sentinel” because they signal the need for immediate investigation and response. (Joint Commission, January 2016)
2. **Examples:** Each Baltimore City provider (BHSB-funded or non-funded) will report to BHS Baltimore whenever any of the following incidents occur or the program has reasonable cause to believe that such an incident has occurred:
 - a. Death of a consumer, on and off site,
 - b. Death of a visitor or staff member while at the program site, as a result of duties and responsibilities i.e. overdose or home visit
 - c. Sexual assault that occurs in the program, on and off site,
 - d. Serious injury to a patient while at the program that requires medical attention,
 - e. Assault on a client, staff member, or visitor, any battery on a client, staff member, or visitor or any abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a client, staff member, or visitor by another client, program staff or visitor, and
 - f. External disaster or other emergency situation that affects the continued safe operation of the program.
 - g. Overdose (lethal and non-lethal) on and off site,
 - h. Suicide attempt, on and off site for currently enrolled and discharged consumers with 72 hours
 - i. Medication diversion/dispensing errors (medication missing/stolen from program, spillage during dispensing, dosing errors, etc.)
3. **Sentinel Event Report:** Within 72 hours (or three business days), the program will submit a report to the BHSB Compliance Department by fax at 410.735.8541 or by email at sentinel.events@bhsbaltimore.org or that includes the items contained in the BHSB Sentinel Event Report Form (see attached).
4. **Additional Information:** Within 72 hours of receipt of the report or as soon as possible, the Compliance Manager will contact the program to obtain additional information if needed, such as:
 - a. Were there established policies and procedures that were breached?
 - b. What were the conditions of the area involved regarding staffing, general environment, availability of supplies, equipment, and communication?
 - c. Has all relevant mandated reporting been completed and documented?
5. **Report Distribution:** Within 72 hours of receiving report or as soon as possible, the Compliance Manager will share the report and additional information with BHSB’s Medical Director and Program Lead as well as their immediate supervisor.
6. **BHSB Debriefing Meeting:** In collaboration with the Medical Director, the Compliance Manager will determine if and when to convene a debriefing meeting with the established committee.

7. Feedback to Provider: Within 72 hours of the debriefing meeting or as soon as possible, feedback will be provided to the program by designated staff to include further questions or inquiries as to the details of the incident, its resolution, or any additional follow-up recommendations or requirements.
8. Root Cause Analysis & Performance Improvement Plan (PIP): At its discretion, BHSB may *require* providers to submit a Root Cause Analysis & Performance Improvement Plan. If required, the provider will submit the analysis and PIP to BHSB within 10 business days after BHSB issues the request.
9. Review and monitoring of Root Cause Analysis & Performance Improvement Plan: The Compliance Manager will review the analysis and plan within 72 hours of receipt and present the plan and their recommendations for approval to the Vice President of Provider Relations and Accountability. The Compliance department will then monitor completion of the plan according to timelines established in plan.
10. Record Keeping: All sentinel event documentation is placed in the program's master file in the Provider Relations' Administrative Assistant's office and tracked in the Sentinel Event Spreadsheet. Tracking of sentinel events will occur in the Provider Relations department.

Effective Date: 7/28/16