

From: Doug VanEpps (Chris Harris)
To: CDRP Centers
CC: Michelle Hilliker
Date: 7/2/2009 12:34 PM
Subject: Criminal History Background Check DRAFT Materials - August 1 Comment Period Deadline
Attachments: Proposed Amendment Section 6.8 PP Manual.pdf; Draft Model CHBC Policy.pdf; Proposed Contract Assurances.pdf; Draft Instructions for CHBCs.pdf

Center Directors:

By way of a follow up to the Directors' Meeting conversation regarding SCAO's proposed requirement of centers' completing criminal history background checks (CHBC) in the 2010 grant cycle, a number of materials are attached for your comment. These include:

1. Proposed amendment to Section 6.8 of the CDRP Policies and Procedures Manual.
2. Draft model CHBC policy that can be tailored to local need and adopted by a center's board of directors.
3. Proposed contract assurances document to accompany FY 2009-2010 A/V funds and 2010 CDRP funds.
4. Draft instructions for completing the CHBCs. This is unchanged from the document circulated at the Directors' Meeting.

In brief, the proposed policy requires that all employees, volunteers, and interns have CHBCs, which consists of both an ICHAT and DHS Central Registry check. For new employees, volunteers, and interns, this would take place prior to their working on any activity funded in whole or in part by CDRP funds. For current employees, volunteers, and interns, the CHBC must be completed by March 1, 2010.

A/V Centers: For centers also receiving Access and Visitation Grant funding, the CHBCs must be completed for employees, volunteers, and interns working on any aspect of A/V funded activities prior to September 30, 2009. This is a requirement of SCAO's current DHS A/V contract.

The draft policy is NOT intended to replace existing policies that accomplish the same objective as the model policy.

One note of explanation: While DHS required only background checks for those persons "working directly with children," in that mediators and staff working on A/V-funded cases routinely work on other matters involving children, it seemed incongruous to have a CHBC requirement based solely on a funding source and a case type. Many centers are now working with children in a wide variety of case types, supported by numerous funding sources. Frequently the other funding sources, e.g., ISDs, also have CHBC requirements. It also appeared that keeping track of and assigning mediators who have had CHBCs may be challenging, and this would be problematic in assigning mediators in last-minute situations when, for example, a mediator with a CHBC report canceled and the only available alternate mediator had not had a CHBC conducted.

In short, we concluded that it would be far simpler, and perhaps the overall better practice, to have CHBCs conducted for all employees, volunteers, and interns than to attempt to differentiate among persons by funding source or case type.

Also note: Members of boards of directors and advisory committees are not included in this requirement. While SCAO believes it to be a better practice to include these two entities in a policy, the model policy does not include them because board and committee members do not work directly with parties. Nevertheless, a board may wish to include itself, and the policy can be amended accordingly.

All comments received by August 1, will be carefully considered prior to our office's adopting a policy in early August. Please keep in mind that the attached documents are "discussion drafts" only.

Thank you.

Doug

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