# Sentinel Event Reporting and Reviews

System Review Committee | Quality Council

June 25, 2026

Department of HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Division of Program Quality and Integrity

# Agenda

- ❑ Purpose of Sentinel Event Reporting
- ❑ Categories of Sentinel Events
- ❑ Who Reports
- ❑ Process of Notification and Reporting to DHHS
- ❑ Sentinel Event Review Framework

# Purpose of Sentinel Event Reporting

**Purpose**

- Part of DHHS quality assurance programs, intended to:
  - Have a positive impact in improving care and service delivery
  - Understand the causes that underlie sentinel events
  - Make changes to internal and external systems and processes as indicated
  - Reduce the probability of such events occurring in the future

**Statutory Authority** NH RSA 126-A:4,IV

- Quality Assurance programs are established in statute as an "…ongoing system of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the appropriateness of services provided to individuals served by the department or any of its contract service providers so that problems or trends in the delivery of services are identified and steps to correct problems can be taken."

# Sentinel Event Categories

1. Any sudden, unanticipated, or accidental death not related to the natural course of an illness or underlying condition
2. Permanent loss of function
3. Homicide
4. Suicide
5. Suicide attempt with self injurious behavior requiring medical intervention
6. Rape or sexual assault
7. Serious physical injury
8. Serious psychological injury
9. Injury due to physical or mechanical restraints
10. High profile event such as police involvement with arrest or media coverage

# Who Reports Sentinel Events?

**Reportable sentinel events** are events that involve individuals who:

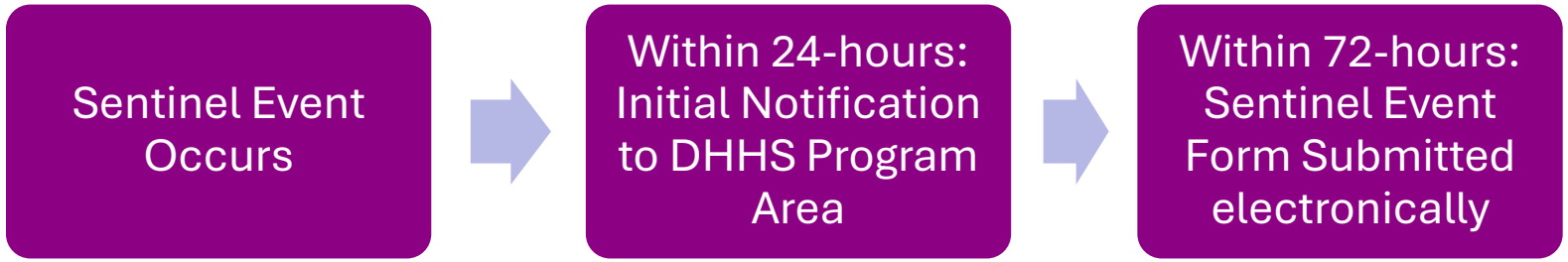
- Are receiving or have had contact with individuals who provide Department funded service at community agencies (Developmental Waiver Services fall under this).
- Have received Department funded services within the preceding 30 days.
- Have received Community Mental Health Center Emergency Services, Rapid Response services and/or any known psychiatric hospitalization within the past year.
- Have an open case with Child or Adult Protective Services.

Applies to multiple DHHS Divisions (DLTSS being one), multiple Bureaus, facilities, and program areas across the Department.

Sentinel Events for developmental services come to DHHS from Area Agencies when they learn of an event from service providers.

* Does not replace mandatory to APS or DCYF

# Notification of Sentinel Events




**Within 24 hours**

- Reporting entities name, agency, and phone number
  - Beneficiary's name & DOB
  - Location, date, time of event
  - Description of what happened and identification of others involved, including the police and media

**Within 72 hours**

- Completed Sentinel Event Reporting Form to DHHS Sentinel Event Reporting portal (coming soon)
- Area Agencies currently report to BDS through HRST.
- BDS then sends reports to the Bureau of Program Quality (BPQ).

# Sentinel Event Reviews

**Sentinel Event Reviews include:**

- A case presentation that provides review of the event and relevant documentation/information.
- Discussion of facts supporting a culture of safety and system level change – free of blame towards and individual, agency, or organization.
- Identification of systemic factors, opportunities for improvement and recommendations for follow-up activities, if any.
  - Actionable
  - Responsive to systemic issues identified
  - Forward looking

- **Examples of Recommendations and System Level Changes Identified:**
  - Changes needed to Administrative Rule
  - Changes needed in legislation
  - Updating/establishing/clarifying policy & procedures
  - Identifying support and technical assistance needed for providers/agencies/contractors

# Thank you!

**Contact us:**

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