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Title of Document: Concerns of People Who Receive Services: Reporting and Resolution

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Effective Date: October 17, 2024

Applicability: DDSN Central Office, DDSN Regional Centers, DSN Boards and Contracted Service Providers

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**PURPOSE:**

This document establishes policies and procedures to assure that concerns of people who receive services and supports or representatives acting on their behalf are handled appropriately.

Concerns may be related to services, supports, or programs operated or funded by the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN), a DDSN Regional Center, a DSN Board, or contracted service provider, but are not concerns that rise to the level of critical incident, abuse, neglect or exploitation as defined by DDSN policy or adverse decisions that can be appealed or reconsidered in accordance with DDSN Policy.

Contacts typically are made when the person who receives services or their representative feels their concern has not been satisfied through informal or routine contact with staff directly associated with the service, support or program. Contact with someone outside of the situation provides an opportunity for objective and impartial review of the concern.

**POLICY**

All providers will have a procedure for reporting concerns for people who receive services and supports or representatives acting in their behalf. The procedure must assure the rights of those supported and their representatives to voice concerns without fear of retaliation. The procedure must be reflective of the values and principles of DDSN and clearly delineate all steps in the process. People who receive services and their representatives must be provided with information about the process in a manner that

is easy to understand. Support to express concerns or assistance with the process must be provided, if needed.

Concerns involving the health and safety of people supported must receive immediate review and action without delay.

**PROCEDURES FOR CONCERNS REPORTED TO DDSN**

People supported and/or their representatives when expressing concerns to DDSN will be encouraged to seek remediation by following the provider’s procedure for concerns.

When the concern is unable to be resolved by the provider, then the matter may be referred to the DDSN Constituent Services Coordinator.

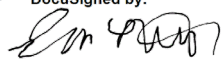
Follow-up to a concern by the DDSN Constituent Services Coordinator will include contact with the person or representative expressing the concern, review and research of the concern, efforts to mediate resolution, and documentation of all actions taken. The nature of the concern and the needs of the individual will factor into the time required for response, but generally, responses are provided within ten (10) business days.


DDSN Regional Center Facility Administrators/Provider Executive Directors/CEOs will be notified whenever a concern with a DDSN facility/provider has been brought to DDSN’s attention.

Concerns generating media contacts will be coordinated as outlined in DDSN Directive 133-01-DD: Media and Publications Policies.

Critical incidents and allegations of abuse shall be reported as outlined in DDSN Directive 100-09-DD: Critical Incident Reporting and DDSN Directive 534-02-DD: Procedures for Preventing and Reporting Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of People Receiving Services from DDSN or a Contracted Provider Agency. Adverse decisions shall be handled in accordance with DDSN Directive 535-11-DD: Appeal and Reconsideration of Decisions.

Concerns brought to DDSN’s attention through legislative contacts will be shared with the DDSN State Director or his/her designee.

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