COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

JACK BARBER, M.D.
INTERIM COMMISSIONER

DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
Post Office Box 1797
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1797

Telephone (804) 786-3921
Fax (804) 371-6638
www.dbhds.virginia.gov

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Dear Community Agencies and Hospital Representatives:

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and Ascend Management Innovations are working together to address barriers to the timely completion of Level II Preadmission Screens (PASRR). These assessments are conducted for community-dwelling individuals with suspected or diagnosed mental illness, intellectual or developmental disability/related condition who are seeking nursing facility services. We have identified **two primary barriers:**

1. The need for refresher **education** about the process and documentation requirements, and
2. The reluctance of some physician offices to provide documents without a **HIPAA release.**

Resolving Barrier 1: PASRR Process and Documentation Education

To address the first barrier, below are a few basics regarding the process and documentation requirements. The Ascend website (www.ascendami.com) has more information, including a Virginia-specific tutorial video (http://www.screencast.com/t/smGZoREZ3).

The assessment has three main components:

1. **Document Review:** Thoroughly reviewing documentation your organization submits to Ascend.
2. **Interview:** Conducting a scheduled, onsite, face-to-face interview of the individual.
3. **Determination:** Providing a written summary of findings for your organization, the individual's primary physician if identified, and the individual assessed. If the individual has a legal guardian, he/she will also receive a summary.

To initiate the assessment, Ascend must receive all of the following required documents from you (faxed to 1-877-431-9568):

- Completed **UAI**
- Completed **DMAS 95** form
- Medical **History & Physical** for the individual (must have been completed within the most recent 12 months and signed by physician)
- **Psychiatric evaluation** if referring for serious mental illness (must have been completed within the most recent 12 months and signed by psychiatrist)
- **Intelligence Testing** if referring for intellectual disability (if scores are not available, Ascend has contracted with professionals who can conduct IQ testing)
- **Guardianship** documentation, if applicable

Sending the complete set along with the referral will expedite the process for you and the individual being assessed. The individual cannot progress along the continuum until the PASRR process is complete.

Resolving Barrier 2: PASRR and Protected Health Information (PHI)

The PASRR Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), commissioned by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), has clearly documented that **HIPAA permits providers to disclose protected health information (PHI) to other providers who are caring for, or providing services to, the same individual *without* consent** (http://www.pasrrassist.org/resources/federal-regulations/directors-corner-why-hipaa-not-barrier-getting-pasrr-done). PTAC references a guide to HIPAA recently released by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), a division of the federal Health and Human Services (HHS) agency. Version 2.0 of its *Guide to Privacy and Security of Electronic Health Information* is primarily applicable to physician groups and smaller health providers and businesses, but it provides a good overview of HIPAA for any "covered entity" (CE).

To assist you in assuaging provider concerns regarding HIPAA and PASRR, we are including **the attached letter** for you to provide to physician offices at the time of your request:

If you have any questions, please call Ascend Management Innovations at 877-431-1388. Ask for a Virginia PASRR representative.

DBHDS thanks you in advance for your help in complying with the federal requirements of PASRR so that Virginia residents with serious mental illness and/or intellectual disabilities or related conditions receive the services and supports they need to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Tammy Peacock
Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services
1220 Bank St.
P.O. Box 1797
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1797
(804) 371-0363
tammy.peacock@dbhds.virginia.gov