

SUD CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND SENTINEL EVENTS

Understanding the Difference: Critical Incidents vs. Sentinel Events for Residential Providers

All critical incidents must be reviewed by the residential provider to determine whether they meet the criteria for a sentinel event. Critical incidents include:

- Death of a recipient
- Serious illness requiring hospital admission
- Allegations of abuse or neglect
- Injuries requiring emergency room visits or hospitalization
- Arrests and/or convictions
- Serious challenging behaviors
- Medication errors (not consumer refusals)

Sentinel events are those critical incidents that result in death, permanent harm, severe temporary harm requiring life-sustaining intervention, or otherwise represent a significant patient safety concern. Not every critical incident is a sentinel event; however, every critical incident requires review and classification to determine if it is sentinel within three (3) business days of the incident.

If an event is determined to be sentinel, immediate notification to MSHN must occur via email to sentinevents@midstatehealthnetwork.org within 24 hours of the event and also must be reported on quarterly reporting by the provider in REMI. Additionally, all recipient deaths, regardless of cause, and all administrations of Narcan must be reported to MSHN within 48 hours. If an event is believed to be newsworthy or represents a community crisis (that is not an immediately reportable death), the provider must notify the MSHN Chief Executive Officer and the sentinevents@midstatehealthnetwork.org email within 24 hours of the incident.

When uncertainty exists regarding whether an event meets sentinel event criteria, providers are encouraged to consult with MSHN for guidance by email to sentinevents@midstatehealthnetwork.org.

Timeliness Matters

One of the most common issues identified with SUD sentinel events is the timeliness of incident review and follow-up activities that must occur if a critical incident is determined to be sentinel. Timely reporting allows MSHN to meet MDHHS reporting requirements, provide support when needed, and identify emerging trends.

For Critical Incidents, residential providers are expected to:

- Review critical incidents promptly upon occurrence
- Determine whether an incident meets sentinel event criteria within three (3) business days
- Notify MSHN immediately via sentinevents@midstatehealthnetwork.org when a sentinel event is identified
- Initiate a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) within two (2) additional business days of an event being classified as a sentinel event

Deaths as a result of suspected staff action or inaction, or any death that is the subject of a recipient rights investigation, licensing, or police investigation requires additional information to be submitted to sentinevents@midstatehealthnetwork.org for reporting to MDHHS. The additional information must include the following:

- Name of beneficiary
- Beneficiary ID number (Medicaid ID/MiChild ID)
- Consumer ID if there is no beneficiary ID number.
- Date, time and place of death (if a licensed foster care facility, include the license #)
- Preliminary cause of death
- Contact person's name and E-mail address

Root Cause Analysis

A Root Cause Analysis (RCA) is not intended to identify blame; rather, it is a structured process used to understand what happened, why it happened, and what can be done to prevent similar events from occurring in the future. The strongest corrective actions address system-level issues and lead to measurable improvements in care and safety.

An effective RCA should examine:

- Contributing factors
- System vulnerabilities
- Opportunities for improvement
- Corrective actions that create sustainable change

SUD CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND SENTINEL EVENTS

Reporting Reminders

Please remember the following key reporting reminders:

1. Critical incidents are reported quarterly through REMI
2. Sentinel events require immediate notification to MSHN
3. Recipient deaths and Narcan administrations must be reported within 48 hours
4. Sentinel event determinations must occur within three (3) business days
5. Root Cause Analyses must be initiated within two (2) business days following sentinel event classification

MSHN appreciates the partnership of our provider network in maintaining a culture of safety, accountability, and continuous improvement.

For questions regarding critical incident reporting, sentinel event notification, or reporting requirements, please contact sentinelevents@midstatehealthnetwork.org.