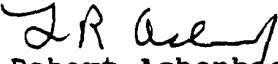


LICENSING ALERT


L. Robert Achenbach
Deputy Secretary for Quality Assurance
and Health Planning

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Division of Drug and Alcohol Program Licensing
Licensing Alert 5-96

Unannounced Visits

Internal and external reviews of the Division's licensing procedures indicate a need to increase unannounced visits to drug and alcohol treatment providers.

This Alert is to explain the purposes for unannounced visits and to clarify when and how these visits will be conducted.

Unannounced visits may be conducted for a variety of reasons, including:

- (1) Conducting a complaint investigation.
- (2) Monitoring the implementation of plans of correction submitted as a result of a complaint investigation.
- (3) Monitoring the implementation of action plans submitted as a result of a licensing visit. Visits in this instance will usually occur if there has been a pattern of non-compliance on certain standards or if there are violations which directly affect the health and welfare of patients, i.e., untimely physical examinations, inadequate maintenance of the physical plant, improper handling of medication.
- (4) Reviewing a newly licensed facility for compliance with regulations and facility policies and procedures approved by the Division.

These visits will usually be conducted by one Division staff member. Upon arrival at the facility, Division staff will announce to facility staff in charge the reason for the unannounced visit, and then proceed to inspect/review the area(s) in question. At the conclusion of the visit, feedback will be provided unless consultation with Division supervisory staff is necessary. In this case, feedback will be provided at a later time. If there are citations, a letter will be sent to the facility, i.e., requesting the submission of action plans, noting the need for a follow-up visit by the Division, the issuance of an Intent to Show Cause letter.

The legal authority for conducting unannounced visits is found in 28 PA Code §709.15 Right to enter and inspect.

Should you have questions regarding this Alert, you may contact Carol Bashore or Arvida Wanner at (717) 783-8675.