

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE LHRC**

Again, your commitment to serving on a DBHDS Local Human Rights Committee (LHRC) is greatly appreciated. These Committees play a vital role in the Department's Human Rights Program by providing independent oversight throughout our state facilities and other public and private organizations. Specific duties are outlined below and will be explained during orientation.

Departmental Facilities and Licensed Organizations are guided by ***Rules and Regulations to Assure the Rights of Individuals Receiving Services from Providers Licensed, Funded or Operated by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services*** and by the Department's commitment to provide services that are responsive to the unique needs of individual clients and that maximize opportunities for self-determination and recovery. Nevertheless, these goals must frequently be reconciled with the need to protect the rights of others, the provision of therapeutic treatment, and the need to minimize the economic burden of service provision on the Commonwealth. Local Human Rights Committees are often called upon to assist in this reconciliation.

Upon notice that you have submitted application, the Committee to which you have made application will invite to visit a meeting and participate in an interview.

The following is provided for your information:

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### **The Local Human Rights Committee:**

- Is a committee of community volunteers who are broadly representative of various professional and consumer groups;
- Performs certain oversight functions as specified in the Rules and Regulations; and
- Is appointed by the State Human Rights Committee.

### **Functions of the Local Human Rights Committee:**

- Conduct fact finding hearings and make recommendations for resolution of complaints not resolved informally;
- Review and make recommendations concerning program requests for variances to the Human Rights Regulations;
- Review program policies, procedures and practices relating to client rights, and make recommendations for change; and
- Perform other oversight functions as specified in the Local Human Rights Committee's bylaws.

### **Requirements of Local Human Rights Committee Members:**

- Willingness to work within the parameters of the Department's human rights process in order to resolve complaints and to facilitate improvements and/or changes in the system;
- Annual participation in human rights training that is provided by the Department;
- Regular meeting attendance. All LHRCs meet at least quarterly – some meet monthly. It is essential that a quorum be present; and
- Strict observance of client confidentiality.

### **Composition:**

- It is important that membership of Local Human Rights Committees broadly represents professionals, consumer groups, family members and other interested persons in order to maintain objectivity and a balanced diversity. Therefore, in appointing members to Local Human Rights Committees, the State Human Rights Committee takes into consideration the composition of each Local Human Rights Committee, one at a time. For this reason, nominees who are well qualified may not be appointed, simply because of the existing makeup of the Committee. We strongly encourage individuals who are not appointed to consider serving on another Local Human Rights Committee or to apply for appointment at another time.

**NOTE:** Because of the potential for conflict of interest, attorneys and others who have represented a specific client(s) in an organization for which the Local Human Rights Committee is established shall not participate in Local Human Rights Committee proceedings where that client(s) is a party to the proceeding.