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OSIG NEWS

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OSIG RECOMMENDS STEPS TO AVOID MEDICATION VARIANCES AT DBHDS FACILITIES

The Virginia Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG) recommends that the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) establish a Departmental Instruction (DI) that outlines procedures for classifying and reporting medication variances and provide staff more frequent medication variance training. OSIG made these recommendations in a [report](#) to the Governor after conducting a review of medication variances occurring in DBHDS facilities in fiscal year (FY) 2018.

“OSIG reviewed incidents of medication error from a variety of sources and evaluated events to identify patterns, incidence and prevalence; generate performance improvement and lessen the risk of future events,” said State Inspector General Michael C. Westfall. “In reviewing DBHDS-operated facility medication variances, OSIG found differences in the way errors were being reported and categorized. In addition, pharmacy and nursing staff are using numerous forms and categorization types.”

OSIG collected 1,662 incident reports involving medication variances reported by all facilities in FY 2018. A lack of uniformity in reporting medication variances made it difficult to identify systemic issues.

“OSIG also found that DBHDS does not currently have a centralized system for reviewing and responding to facility medication variances. This responsibility is currently being managed at a facility level by risk managers,” said Westfall. “OSIG recommends that DBHDS compile, benchmark and analyze all medication variances for all facilities at the DBHDS Central Office, allowing for the identification of systemic issues that are affecting patient safety.”

OSIG contracted the services of a licensed pharmacist to analyze and categorize the medication variance data collected in accordance with industry standards.

DBHDS said it plans to review existing practices and “unique realities of each facility” and ensure each facility has a policy tailored to its needs, including procedures for classifying and reporting medication variances, adding that medication variance training will be incorporated into applicable facility curriculums. DBHDS also is in the process of building a system wide Incident Tracker that will require all facilities to enter data using the same requirements and definitions.

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Established in 2012, the Virginia Office of the State Inspector General manages the State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline; conducts investigations and performance audits of state agencies; provides training and standards for the commonwealth's internal audit programs; and conducts inspections and reviews of Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services-run facilities and programs.