



# MENTAL RETARDATION BULLETIN

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

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SUBJECT:

**Certified Investigations**

BY:

  
**Kevin T. Casey**  
**Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation**

## SCOPE:

County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program Administrators  
Base Service Unit Directors  
Community Home Directors  
Family Living Directors  
Adult Training Facility Directors  
Vocational Facility Directors  
Early Intervention Program Directors  
Non-State Operated Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded  
(ICF/MR) Directors  
State Operated Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded  
(ICF/MR) Directors

## PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to review the registration process for the Certified Investigator Trainings and Recertification courses, to announce the Certified Investigator Recertification qualifications, and an overview of the optional oversight process.

## BACKGROUND:

Mental Retardation Bulletin 00-01-06, *Announcement of Certified Investigator Training*, communicated the schedule for the Certified Investigator Training for FY 2001-02. This bulletin conveyed that certification is valid for three years and recertification classes would be available beginning in September 2004. Mental Retardation Bulletin 00-01-05, *Incident Management*, established processes that include uniform practices for the investigation of incidents with the expectation that the investigations be conducted by certified investigators. Through HCSIS Bits and other communications, the Office of Mental Retardation (OMR) announced additional Certified Investigator trainings through FY 2003-04. Mental Retardation Bulletin 6000-04-01, *Incident Management*, became effective on February 28, 2004. This bulletin describes the revised incident management processes, including the continued expectation that investigations be conducted by certified investigators. In addition, the bulletin describes the reporting of the analysis of the quality of incident investigations information.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

**THE APPROPRIATE MENTAL RETARDATION REGIONAL PROGRAM MANAGER**

## DISCUSSION:

The certification course introduces the following:

- The relationship of the Incident Management Mental Retardation Bulletin to the investigation of incidents
- The investigation process
- A process for evaluating the quality of incident investigations

The recertification course covers the following:

- Review of investigation activities designed to improve existing skills
- Group activities designed to enhance investigation skills

## INITIAL CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS:

In order to be a Certified Investigator, a person must:

- Be a High School Graduate or G.E.D.
- Be 21 years of age or older
- Meet the criminal background requirement of the Older Adults Protective Services Act and, if applicable, the Child Protective Services Law
- Complete "The Investigative Process: Organizational Context and Processes" web-based training on the Learning Management System (LMS) within three months of the course date
- Successfully complete the entire four days of certification training and pass the exam

Training and testing will be required for certification as an investigator. Any individual who attends all four days of the training and fails the examination shall have two additional opportunities to retake and pass the certified investigation examination. Applicants must provide verification of meeting the above requirements from either their employer or the County MH/MR Program in which they choose to be available to conduct investigations. **If the applicant expects to be conducting certified investigations and was previously certified since October 2001, they should not enroll in the four-day course but instead register for the Recertification course.**

## RECERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS:

Initial Certification is valid for a three-year period. **Recertification is only necessary for individuals who expect to be conducting certified investigations.**

In order to maintain certification, certified investigators must:

- Have completed **three** certified investigations during the three-year certification period
- Attend the one-day recertification class

If an investigator wishes to continue to conduct certified investigations and has done less than three investigations during the certification period, the investigator must:

- Actively participate in the quarterly or semi-annual peer review of the quality of investigations by serving as a member of a Peer Review committee or a Risk Management committee (reference Pennsylvania Certified Investigators Manual, Appendix III). Participation is defined as using the evaluation tools to review **at least three** investigations and discussing the results with the committee (reference Pennsylvania Certified Investigators Manual, Appendix III)
- Attend the one-day recertification class

## REGISTRATION:

### Initial Certification

The investigation certification course will be conducted by OMR through a contractor. The current list of trainings will be available on LMS at <https://www.humanservices-r.state.pa.us/HCSISLMS> . All sessions are four consecutive days, with the examination on the fourth day. Participants must attend all four days.

Registration will occur on LMS. LMS will e-mail a confirmation letter to the applicant when they register for the training. **This letter must be brought to the training session for admission.** Please make sure your LMS profile reflects your current e-mail address. See your LMS administrator regarding any questions related to your LMS roles.

After registering for a course on LMS, applicants must submit a *Verification of General Qualifications* (Form A, available as a download on LMS previously known as Attachment B) certifying that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements to be certified. Applicants must print their transcript from LMS to verify completion of the web-based course, "The Investigative Process: Organizational Context and Processes." **The verification form (Form A) with attachment (transcript) must be faxed two weeks prior to the class to the fax number on the verification form.**

### Recertification

The recertification course will be conducted by OMR through a contractor. The list of available trainings will be listed on LMS. Applicants may only enroll in classes that will be held during the four months prior to expiration of their certification. All sessions are one day in length. Participants must attend the entire day to receive recertification.

A notification of Certified Investigator expiration will be e-mailed four months before the expiration. Registration for recertification will occur on LMS. LMS will e-mail a confirmation letter to the applicant when they register for the training. **This letter must be brought to the training session for admission.** Please make sure your LMS profile reflects your current e-mail address. See your LMS administrator regarding any questions related to your LMS roles.

Applicants must submit a *Verification of Recertification Qualifications* (Form B, available as a download on LMS) certifying the applicant completed all necessary

requirements to be recertified. **Verifications (Form B) must be faxed two weeks prior to the class to the fax number on the verification form.**

Registration Process for the Recertification Class:

- Must register on LMS for the recertification class and attend the class within the four-month period prior to the expiration of certification. **(IMPORTANT: All other classes will view as closed on LMS if not within the four-month period for each unique user)**
- The recertification classes will only be open for registration for the four-month period prior to each applicant's expiration of certification (The classes will no longer be available after the expiration of certification)
- Failing to complete registration on LMS and attend the class during the four months prior to expiration will disqualify your eligibility to be recertified
- If not recertified prior to the end of the (three-year) certification, the person is no longer certified
- Once certification is expired, the person is **not** to conduct certified investigations

If necessary, please contact OMR by e-mail at [RA-impolicy@state.pa.us](mailto:RA-impolicy@state.pa.us) to request an exception to register for a recertification class after expiration of certification. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed and validated.

There is no fee being charged for the training. Meals, lodging costs and travel expenses are the responsibility of the participants.

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS:**

OMR will provide an external evaluation of the quality of investigations. OMR has contracted with Labor Relations Alternatives, Inc. (LRA) to provide an oversight review of a sample of investigations that have been conducted at the provider, county and regional levels. Based on this review, LRA will provide an objective report to OMR regarding the quality of the investigations as well as the extent to which the evaluation procedures are being appropriately followed. Cooperation with this evaluation process is expected from all entities involved.

## **OPTIONAL OVERSIGHT PROCESS OF INVESTIGATIONS:**

Appendix III of the Certified Investigators Manual explains the optional oversight process that may be used when reviewing the quality of investigations. The optional oversight of the investigative process will be the option of the Counties, Regional Offices of OMR and Central Office of OMR.

This process will include:

- Monitoring and providing guidance to Providers, Counties and Regions as needed in conducting investigations
- Evaluating the quality of investigations

- Identifying both systemic and individual investigator concerns and using this information to improve the quality of the investigative process through evaluation and oversight

The review process summary is as follows:

- Providers and Counties shall cooperate fully with their oversight entity
- County and/or Region will review investigative record on site
- **Feedback will be provided to the Provider, County and/or Region**

**OBSOLETE BULLETIN:**

Mental Retardation Bulletin 00-01-06, *Announcement of Certified Investigator Training*, issued September 6, 2001.