



## LICENSING ALERT 02-21

Ellen DiDomenico

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen DiDomenico". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue shadow effect behind the text.

September 1, 2021

Deputy Secretary

Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs

**Effective:** September 1, 2021

**Subject:** Emergency Contact Notification by Inpatient Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facilities

To ensure individual safety, when an individual leaves treatment against medical advice it is important for treatment providers to notify families and/or emergency contacts that this has occurred. In April of 2019, DDAP issued [Informational Bulletin 01-19](#) reminding providers of this best practice.

Act 41 of 2021, 71 P.S. § 613.1(8.1), took effect on August 29, 2021. Act 41 requires that inpatient drug and alcohol treatment facilities must **immediately** notify an emergency contact if a patient leaves the facility against medical advice, provided the patient has not revoked consent to notify the emergency contact if one is on file. Notification shall occur immediately and **in no event later than 12 hours of a patient leaving against medical advice**. Inpatient drug and alcohol treatment facilities must notify the emergency contact **by a method consented to by the patient**.

**Notification Attempts:** Inpatient drug and alcohol treatment facilities must attempt to notify the emergency contact **at least once** and develop policies and procedures to implement a notification protocol. The written policies and procedures must include details regarding how the facility will advise patients of notifications required to be made by the facility. In addition, the policies and procedures must dictate that a facility may not make notifications when the facility has knowledge of or reason to know of allegations of domestic abuse perpetrated upon the patient by the patient's designated emergency contact.

Questions regarding this Licensing Alert should be directed to the Bureau of Program Licensure at (717)783-8675 or [RA-licensuredivision@pa.gov](mailto:RA-licensuredivision@pa.gov).