

**From:** Lauren M Pomales  
**Subject:** RELEASE: Biennial Mental Health Assessment (BMHA) Program.  
**Date:** Monday, December 18, 2023 1:41:00 PM  
**Attachments:** Biennial Mental Health Assessment  
Program Policy.pdf  
Informer 2023-6.pdf

**RELEASE:** Biennial Mental Health Assessment (BMHA) Program.

**EFFECTIVE:** Immediately.

Please see the following attached documents in reference to the Department's Biennial Mental Health Assessment (BMHA) Program:

1. Biennial Mental Health Assessment (BMHA) Program Policy.  
**NOTE:** This policy will appear in a future General Order.
2. Informer 2023-06, Biennial Mental Health Assessment (BMHA) Program.

Additionally, the Form 56A, Return From Suspension Form has been updated. A copy is available on the PDNet.

**Commanders:** Please complete a Form 159, Order/Directive Verification Form, for each member in your command and attach one printed copy of this message, the attached policy document, and Informer 2023-06. Members will sign the Form 159 stating that they received a copy of the message, policy document, and Informer, which are located in their Department e-mail account. A copy of this message and the attached policy document and Informer will also be posted on the Department's Intranet site.

Members should contact their supervisor with questions. Commanders may contact the Police Human Resources Section at x2208 for concerns that cannot be addressed at the command level.

This message sent authority of Major Daniel L. Kaliszak, Jr. #3576

**Administrative Manual, Article 7, Personnel Issues****7-12.7 BIENNIAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT (BMHA) PROGRAM****GENERAL**

- All sworn members are required to undergo a mental health assessment every two years (i.e., biennially), as required under Public Safety Article §3-209(c).  
**NOTE:** This is not a comprehensive fitness for duty evaluation.
- In order to maintain the confidentiality of the Biennial Mental Health Assessment (BMHA) program, members:
  1. Shall ensure body worn cameras are not worn, or are powered off, while completing these assessments.
  2. Are prohibited from copying, sharing, or recording any portion of an assessment (e.g., the questionnaire, responses to the questionnaire, interview, etc.).

**BIENNIAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS**

- Are confidential in nature.
- Conducted by the Department-approved Psychological Services Caregiver.
- Consist of:
  1. An online screening questionnaire; and  
**NOTE:** This will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete and must be done a minimum of 48 hours prior to the interview.
  2. A follow-up interview with a certified psychologist.  
**NOTE:** This will be conducted in an online format requiring the use of both video and audio and will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes to complete.

**BUREAU CHIEF OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BUREAU**

- Authorizes, upon consultation with the Department-approved Psychological Services Caregiver, the validated screening tool(s) to be used for the BMHA program.

**POLICE HUMAN RESOURCES SECTION (PHRS)**

- Oversees the BMHA program.
- Serves as the liaison to the Department's Psychological Services Caregiver for the purpose of the BMHA program.
- Coordinates scheduling of interview appointments for all sworn members.  
**NOTE:** The PHRS will obtain available appointment times from the Department-approved Psychological Services Caregiver and notify the commands of members requiring scheduling.
- Ensures a member's police powers are suspended, if:
  1. A member fails to complete an assessment by the end of their two-year assessment period.
  2. The Department-approved Psychological Services Caregiver makes a determination that the member is psychologically unable to continue carrying out the essential job functions of a police officer.
- Notifies the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) of program compliance.
- Commander reviews, on a case-by-case basis, whether a member who is suspended and/or placed on modified duty, should be scheduled for an assessment.

**Administrative Manual, Article 7, Personnel Issues****DEPARTMENT-APPROVED PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES CAREGIVER**

- Identifies the validated screening tool(s) to be used for the BMHA program.  
**NOTE:** The Department's Psychological Services Caregiver will obtain authorization from the Bureau Chief of the Professional Standards Bureau, prior to use of the tools.
- Provides available interview appointment times to the Department.
- Conducts the Department's assessments.
- Provides Department members with information about additional mental health resources during their interview, as needed.
- Provides the PHRS with individual verification for each member who has completed an assessment.
- Immediately notifies the PHRS, should a determination be made that a member is psychologically unable to continue carrying out the essential job functions of a police officer.  
**NOTE:** The Department will not be notified of the results of the screening questionnaire or be provided with any details related to the individual assessment unless the Department-approved Psychological Services Caregiver has determined there is an imminent risk for harm to self, another person, or vulnerable populations.

**PRECINCT/SECTION COMMANDER, OR DESIGNEE**

- Ensure scheduling and completion of the assessments for all sworn members assigned to their command.

**SUPERVISORS**

- Coordinate scheduling for completion of an assessment for each member, upon notification by the PHRS.  
**NOTE:** Assessments will be scheduled so that the interview can be completed during a member's tour of duty, whenever possible.
- Ensure members are provided with uninterrupted time and a private space to complete the screening questionnaire and interview portions of the BMHA program.
- Ensure adequate coverage so that scheduled members may complete their interview at the required time, when possible.
- Ensure that the PHRS is notified, upon being informed that a member of their command is unable to complete a screening questionnaire and/or attend the required interview as scheduled, by:
  1. Sending an e-mail to the PHRS upon receipt of the notification; and
  2. Ensuring that a follow-up phone call is made to the PHRS by a supervisor assigned to the member's shift/unit or by precinct/section administrative personnel during business hours.**NOTE:** This call will be made as soon as possible.

**MEMBERS**

- Are required to complete the BMHA program every two years, as scheduled by the PHRS.
- Must contact the Department-approved Psychological Services Caregiver via e-mail as soon as possible upon receiving their scheduled interview appointment date/time and instructions from the PHRS.  
**NOTE:** This will allow the Department-approved Psychological Services Caregiver to initiate the process in a timely fashion.
- Shall complete both portions of their assessment in a private setting away from others in order to maintain confidentiality.

**Administrative Manual, Article 7, Personnel Issues**

- Notify their supervisor as soon as possible, if they are unable to complete a screening questionnaire within the required timeframe and/or attend the required interview as scheduled.