Office of Program Integrity and Accountability

Presented By

The New Jersey Department of Human Services

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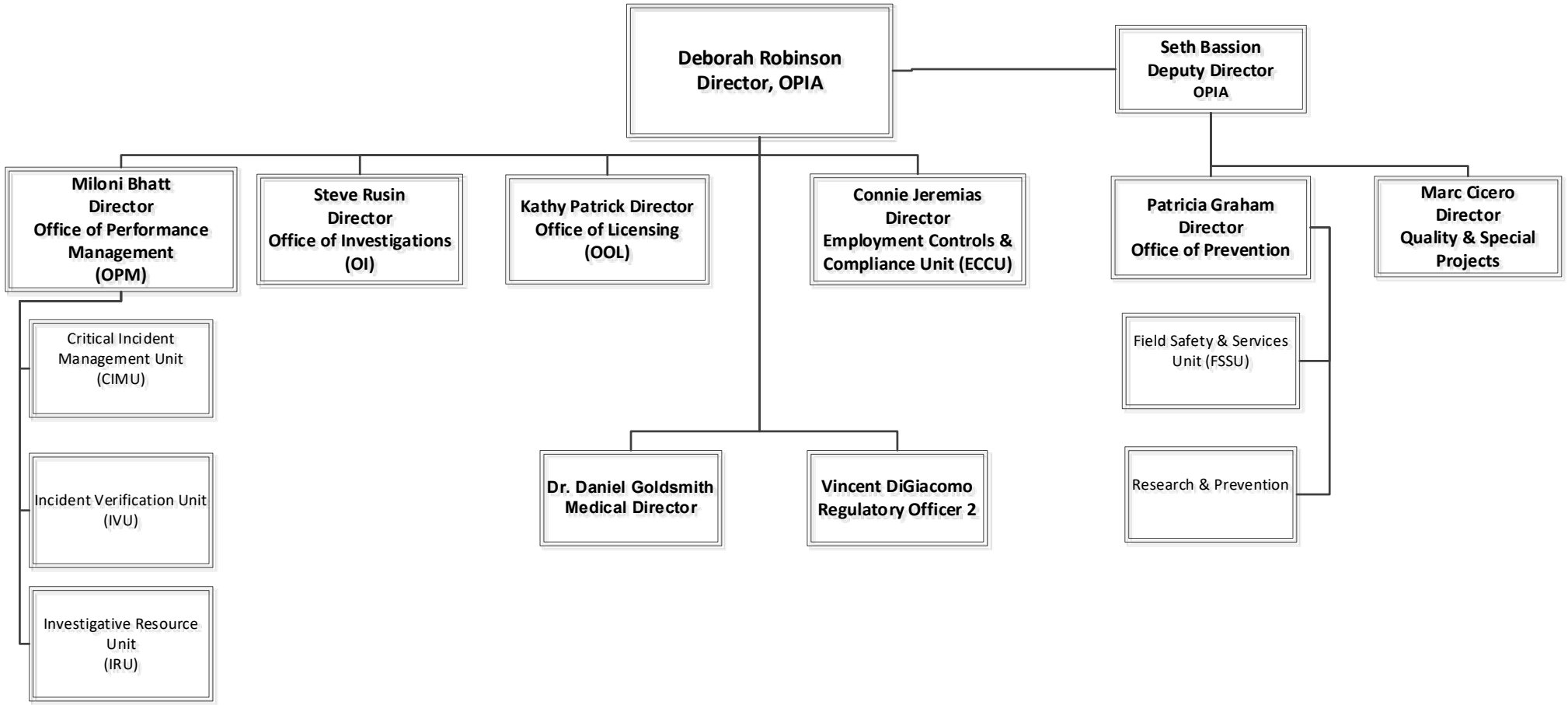
NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES

OPIA

Description

The Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) is responsible for safeguarding the health, safety, and well-being of individuals served through programs overseen by the Department of Human Services (DHS). OPIA works closely with both internal teams and external partners to ensure that all services follow applicable federal and state laws, as well as DHS policies and regulations. Through this oversight, OPIA helps promote high-quality, accountable care across the system.

OPIA Table of Organization



Office of Performance Management

The Office of Performance Management (OPM) helps ensure that all reported incidents involving individuals served by programs licensed, regulated, or funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) are properly tracked, managed, and addressed. OPM oversees the incident response process across the system to promote accountability and safety. It includes three key units: the Critical Incident Management Unit (CIMU), the Incident Verification Unit (IVU), and the Investigative Resource Unit (IRU).

Office of Performance Management

- CIMU
  - Reviews all assigned investigation reports
  - Ensures quality, accuracy, and completeness
  - Communicates findings and closes incidents on behalf of DHS
- IVU
  - Meets with the alleged victim (AV)
  - Conducts visits in person within 48 hours of serious reported incidents
  - Verify the injury and confirm safety measures
  - Notify the provider of any changes to the injury level
- IRU

Office of Investigations

- The Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Investigations (OI) conducts civil investigations into the most serious allegations involving abuse, neglect, or exploitation of individuals served through DHS programs.

- Most of these cases are assigned directly to OI based on the type of allegation. However, incidents not directly assigned to OI may be referred by the Critical Incident Management Unit (CIMU) after further review.

- All OI cases are referred to the Department of Criminal Justice

Office of Licensing

Licensing ensures that service providers meet established standards for safety, quality, and proper care. It gives individuals with disabilities—and their families—confidence that they are receiving support from trained, accountable professionals in regulated environments.

Office of Licensing

- N.J.A.C. 10:44A – Community Residences for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
- N.J.A.C. 10:44B – Community Care Residences
- N.J.A.C. 10:44C – Traumatic Brain Injury Residences

Ancillary Supports

- Medical Director
  - Provides clinical consultation and strategic guidance to OPIA units.
  - Reviews and analyzes medical records, autopsy reports, diagnostic results, and related documentation as part of civil investigations into abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other serious incidents involving individuals served through the Department of Human Services (DHS).

- Regulatory Officer
  - The Regulatory Officer 2 provides guidance and technical assistance to OPIA leadership and staff regarding regulatory interpretation, administrative law, and compliance matters. The position assists in the development of policies, procedures, regulations, and legislative responses impacting OPIA units and supports the Department's investigative, licensing, and incident management functions in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Employment Controls and Compliance Unit

- ECCU oversees compliance for all Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Community and Developmental Center employees who work directly with individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities as well as many program employees receiving funding through the Division of Family Development (DFD) and the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS).
- This includes:
  - Background checks via fingerprinting
  - CARI (Child Abuse Record Information) Checks
  - Pre-employment and random drug testing
  - Sex offender checks and out of state criminal history checks when applicable
  - ECCU manages the Central Registry of Offenders against Individuals with I/DD

Office of Prevention

- The Office of Prevention (OOP) helps protect individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who live in community-based homes licensed by the NJ Department of Human Services (DHS). It was formed in 2023 by combining two previous teams: the Field Safety and Services Unit (FSSU) and the Research and Prevention Unit.

- OOP aims to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation before it happens—by identifying risks, making required unannounced site visits per the Stephen Komninos' Law, and working with provider agencies to improve safety and quality of care.

Office of Prevention

- FSSU staff conduct unannounced visits to every DHS-licensed home at least twice each year. These visits are not inspections for licensing, but rather proactive reviews of how individuals are doing and whether any safety concerns exist
- Research & Prevention leverages data from the Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA), other divisions within the Department of Human Services (DHS), and reputable external research sources to inform recommendations that support systemic improvements. When possible, the office proactively identifies and promotes strategies to prevent or mitigate abuse, neglect, and other adverse events..

Quality & Special Projects

- Performs quality assessments of each OPIA unit to ensure consistency, compliance with standards and quality. (Currently in development phase)

- Assists Director with special projects including, but not limited to:
  - OPIA Website design and maintenance
  - Implementation of P.L. 2025, c. 280, including developing an on-line fine collection process
  - Procurement and implementation of data analytics software, Pulselight Aura

Deputy Director's Office

- Coordinates recruitment, onboarding, staff movement, temporary staffing, separations, organizational charts, workforce reporting, and HR and ERO matters including employee issues, performance, and disciplinary processes.
- Coordinates technology, facilities, security access, parking, vehicles, equipment, records, and other resources staff need to do their work.
- Serves as a central point of contact with IT, Fiscal, Facilities, Security, and other Department partners to address issues before they delay the work.