

Key Elements of the Control Environment

Agency Overview

The Department of Health Professions (DHP) is one of 12 agencies under the Secretary of Health and Human Resources.

DHP is unique in that it serves as an umbrella agency for 13 health regulatory boards and 3 programs. The Agency's Administration Division, Enforcement Division and the Administrative Proceedings Divisions role is to provide support and centralized services to the programs and the health regulatory boards, which license and regulate more than 511,066 healthcare practitioners across 62 professions in the Commonwealth, as well as regulate and inspect applicable facilities and education programs.

DHP's mission is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing the standards of practice, and providing information to healthcare practitioners and the public. The DHP values are exceptional customer service; honesty, fairness, and transparency; competence; continuous improvement; and employee accountability.

Each health regulatory board is composed of practitioners and citizen members appointed by the Governor. A board member serves a four-year term and may be reappointed for one additional four-year term. Each board has specific requirements prescribed by code or regulation that dictate their responsibilities and authority along with the precise size and composition of the board.

The 13 Boards are:

- Board of Medicine
- Board of Nursing
- Board of Dentistry
- Board of Pharmacy
- Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology
- Board of Optometry
- Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers
- Board of Physical Therapy
- Board of Counseling
- Board of Long-Term Care Administrators
- Board of Social Work
- Board of Psychology
- Board of Veterinary Medicine

The three programs are the Health Practitioners Monitoring Program (HPMP), the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP), and the Healthcare Workforce Data Center (HWDC).

The Health Practitioner's Monitoring Program offers an alternative to disciplinary action for qualified healthcare practitioners with a substance use diagnosis, or a mental or physical health diagnosis that may alter their ability to practice their profession safely. The HPMP is administered through the Director's Office of DHP. Services are provided according to a Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Division of Addiction Psychiatry. Decisions recommended by the VCU staff regarding the recovery of a professional client are vetted and ratified by the Monitoring Program Committee. The Monitoring Program Committee, as dictated by the Code of Virginia, is appointed by the DHP Director, and meets regularly.

The Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) is a real-time database of information on dispensed medications in Schedules II, III, and IV, for Schedule V drugs which require a prescription, naloxone, drugs of concern, and cannabis products dispensed by a pharmaceutical processor in Virginia. The PMP contracts with its vendor, Bamboo, to supply the technology solutions required to operate this confidential database. The PMP is overseen by two committees: the PMP Committee and the PMP Advisory Panel. The Code of Virginia delineates the composition and purpose of the Advisory Panel which is to review and respond to unusual patterns of prescribing or dispensing.

The Healthcare Data Workforce Center (HWDC) is within the Director's Office. The HWDC is managed by the Agency's chief data scientist with oversight from the Director's Office. The HWDC works to improve the data collection and measurement of Virginia's healthcare workforce through regular assessment of workforce supply and demand issues among the practitioners licensed in Virginia by DHP. DHP healthcare workforce data is provided online to ensure accessibility of the findings among healthcare decision-makers, hospital systems, academic institutions, and constituents statewide.

Leadership Philosophy

The DHP's leadership philosophy is based upon a common framework, vocabulary, and a shared understanding of what is expected across the organization to enhance stewardship of public trust and commitment to public good. Trust in Agency leadership and integrity is paramount. DHP strives to be a public service leadership model focusing on four key leadership competencies: becoming self-aware, achieving results, engaging others, and leading change.

Our leadership philosophy guides common values, goals, and approaches. We do this by clarity of message, confidence tempered by humility, organizing, and planning strategically, and open-mindedness to feedback and ideas. The Agency Director and Executive Leadership Team have set the tone for the agency. Managers throughout the Agency have internalized DHP's mission in such a way that they can adapt plans and processes as needed while staying true to the mission and values of DHP. All Agency leaders and managers are expected to instill the values and mission in those they lead. Our leaders serve with integrity, professionalism, compassion, and humility.

The Director meets with each of his direct reports every month to remain abreast of issues, offer management advice, and facilitate improvements when opportunities present. All board/division directors are expected to meet with their division managers at least monthly, and each manager at DHP is encouraged to hold regular meetings with their team. In addition, the Executive Leadership Team meets monthly to discuss issues, changes, and developments of concern to the Agency.

Organizational Structure

Various organizational theories argue optimum span of control depends on numerous variables including organizational structures, available technology, the functions being performed, and the competencies of the manager as well as the staff. Generally, it is recommended no more than 10 employees per supervisor. The average span of control for DHP is 3-6 employees per supervisor. There are a few supervisors who exceed 10 employees, but these managers are highly professional/technical positions, requiring less direct, day-to-day supervision and more general management and direction.

Organizational chart(s) detailing each section are maintained by the Director's Office and are updated weekly and reviewed by the Director every year. The reporting relationships provide managers with information appropriate to their responsibility and authority. The organizational structure facilitates the flow of information within and between Boards and divisions. The organizational chart(s) are available electronically on the intranet and the website.

New employees are provided an overview of the agency and organizational structure during onboarding. Consistent with good management practice, employees are asked to adhere to lines of authority, responsibility, and communications as established by the Agency. Nothing, though, prohibits any employee from seeking a meeting with senior management if the employee desires.

Management's Attitude Toward Risk

Risk management is essential for DHP's success in executing its mission. Risk management is embedded in the Agency's day-to-day process through established accountability procedures. The Agency Risk Management and Internal Control Standards (ARMICS) process assesses Agency performance with a critical eye. Therefore, DHP engages a third-party provider to conduct annual ARMICS testing, completing a full Agency-level Assessment for FY22, an Agency-level Control Evaluation for FY23, and a full Agency-level Assessment for FY24. DHP strives to ensure fiscal accountability and to safeguard the Commonwealth's assets. In doing so DHP provides accountability for meeting Agency objectives; promoting the Agency's operational efficiency; improving the reliability of the Agency's financial statements; strengthening DHP's compliance with laws and regulations; and reducing the risk of financial or other asset losses due to fraud, waste, or abuse.

Control activities are the policies and procedures that help ensure management directives are carried out. They include a range of activities as diverse as approvals, authorizations, verifications, reconciliations, reviews of operating performance, security of assets, and segregation of duties. Any position with a control-related activity has that function outlined in its

Employee Work Profile (EWP). Employees are provided with a copy of their EWP which contains the control-related activities. Employees are evaluated annually on the performance of functions/duties/activities outlined in their EWP.

DHP develops an annual Strategic Plan, as required by the Department of Planning and Budget, a Biennial Report, and a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The IT Department (TBS) analyzes its systems using Business Impact Analysis (BIA) with a risk assessment component, and Security Audits. The development of an agency's Strategic Plan and Biennial Report is an agency-wide effort; therefore, most employees are aware of the risks (challenges) outlined in those documents.

Recruitment and Demographics:

Personnel policies and procedures facilitate recruiting and the development of competent and trustworthy team members. DHP has intentionally expanded its recruitment scope to ensure that our team reflects the diversity of the Commonwealth. We feel a diverse team is more effective, more productive, and better able to serve the health professionals and citizens of the Commonwealth.

The Department of Health Profession executes our mission by employing a dynamic workforce of talented and dedicated individuals. The following statistics highlight some of the unique features of the DHP workforce and highlight our recruitment practices:

- As of July 1, 2023, DHP has an allotted Maximum Employment Level (MEL) of 294 positions, of which 277 are filled. In addition, DHP has 77 wage positions.
- Of these filled positions, DHP has 229 females and 48 males. A large proportion of our staff is women; this is also true for Agency leadership.
- According to the 2019 census, 46.6% of Virginians identify as a member of a minority population. Regarding race/ethnicity, 101 of our 277 team members identify as a member of a minority group; that is 36.4%. Among the wage positions, 52% (40/77) identify as a member of a minority. In the past three years, 49% of DHP's new hires identify as a member of a minority group.
- In that same period, DHP has taken steps to increase diversity in leadership: 5 individuals who identify as members of a minority group have been hired to fill managerial and leadership positions. In other words, 45% of individuals hired recently in leadership positions identify as a member of a minority group. The current data for leaders reflects the following. DHP currently has 86 employees working in leadership positions. Of this number, 71 (or 83%) are female and 15 (or 17%) are male. African Americans make up 19% (16); Hispanics are represented at 5% (4); and 1% are Asian (1).
- Veterans represent 8% of the DHP workforce. In 2018, only one veteran joined DHP. Since then, 13 have been hired.
- Twenty-two classified and one wage DHP team members identify as ADA disabled.
- Our classified workforce is comprised of a majority of Generation X, followed by the Baby Boomer Generation. The median age is 51 years. This is particularly important to note for succession planning efforts within DHP as a large part of our workforce is eligible (or soon will be) for retirement.

- Anecdotally, numerous individuals who have left the Agency for advancement enthusiastically return.

DHP is a high-performance Agency with solid staff retention and a culture of shared leadership and respect. Retention is higher at DHP than in other state agencies. The turnover rate statewide is 14.2%, and the turnover rate at DHP is 6.8%. Performance expectations are clear and supported by frequent training sessions. Management at all levels is expected to set an example of excellent communication processes and receptivity to feedback.

Ethics and Culture

DHP's 13 health regulatory boards and 3 programs exist to protect the public. The systems, processes, policies, and guidance in place are intended to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance against material misstatements in the licensure process, the confidentiality of personal health information, and the confidentiality of investigations. Therefore, DHP seeks to have employees who are committed to a culture of excellence. DHP maintains a Code of Ethics on the DHP webpage and in the DHP Policy Library on the Agency intranet that every new employee must read and acknowledge electronically at the onset of employment, then annually during their KnowB4 training, an annual VITA security awareness training. The Code of Ethics is comprehensive. Among other items, it addresses conflicts of interest, employee interactions, relationship with the community and the Commonwealth, stewardship of the environment, and aspirations for excellence and continued improvement. Employee Work Performance (EWP) evaluations include the Code of Ethics and ethical behavior as an Agency objective and expectation.