

OL & CONNECT Spotlight

Office of Licensing

Issue VIII: January 2026

**DBHDS Mission Statement:**

Supporting individuals by promoting recovery, self-determination, and wellness in all aspects of life

DBHDS Vision Statement:

A life of possibilities for all Virginians

Director's Corner

Happy New Year!

As we begin the new year, providers are encouraged to set clear goals that support ongoing compliance and timely communication with the department. Key areas may include:

- Submitting corrective action plans within required timeframes (12VAC35-105-170)
- Ensuring modification applications are submitted at least 30 days in advance of the proposed change (12VAC35-105-60)
- Submitting renewal applications at least 30 calendar days prior to the expiration of the license per the [License Renewal and DMAS Enrollment Alignment Memo](#) (October 2025). Failure to do so may result in denied claims due to mismatch between information on the license and DMAS enrollment data.
- Prior to submitting any renewal, providers should access their current license addendum in CONNECT to verify the accuracy of all licensed locations and approved bed counts. When discrepancies are identified, the provider must address them within 5 business days by submitting the appropriate modification via CONNECT.
- Maintaining effective risk management (12VAC35-105-520) and quality improvement (12VAC35-105-620) programs, which are critical to ensuring the health and safety of individuals served. This includes conducting the annual systemic risk assessment (12VAC35-105-520.C.1-5 and D) along with reviewing and updating the quality improvement plan at least annually (12VAC35-105-620.C.1-5).
- If you have not done so already, make it a goal to get news and updates delivered to your inbox from the Office Of Licensing by signing up [HERE](#).

By setting intentional goals and staying proactive throughout the year, providers can strengthen compliance efforts, reduce avoidable delays, and support continuous improvement. Thoughtful planning and timely action will help ensure a successful year ahead.

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Director's Corner Continued**Initial Applicant Orientation Training Update**

In October of 2025, the Office of Licensing launched the Initial Applicant Orientation Training. The Initial Applicant Orientation Training is designed to help applicants understand DBHDS Licensing requirements and successfully navigate the application process. The orientation is only required for applicants pursuing a Priority 1 or Priority 2 service license but is open to all applicants and potential applicants who want to participate. It is specifically geared towards applicants pursuing their first DBHDS service license and must be completed *before* beginning the application process. Priority service applications submitted without completion of the Initial Applicant Orientation Training will not be reviewed under the priority timeline. Instead, they will be placed in non-priority status and processed in the order received.

Initial Applicant Orientation Training details can be found on the Office of Licensing website under the New Applicant tab. Summarized instructions can be found here: <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Instructional-Guidance-for-Initial-Applicant-Orientation-Training.pdf>

If you have questions or need support, please feel free to reach out the Office of Licensing at initialapplicantorientation@dbhds.virginia.gov –we're happy to help.

Updates Related to Behavioral Health Redesign

The Governor's budget includes revised language related to Medicaid behavioral health redesign that proposes delaying full implementation until January 2027. While the operational impact of this proposal on licensing timeframes is not yet fully known, the Office of Licensing (OL) will continue moving forward under the current implementation schedule until further notice. No later than the end of March, the OL will provide training on how to submit applications for new services. Any provider intending to apply for a new service must ensure that the primary individual responsible for submitting the application in CONNECT attends this training.

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Director's Corner Continued

After an application has been submitted and administratively approved, the provider will be required to attend service-specific training(s) addressing the applicable regulatory requirements for the service(s) requested. The provider must then successfully pass a proctored knowledge exam for the application to be considered a priority service application.

New behavioral health licenses are intended to improve coordination, service quality, and outcomes, and providers are strongly encouraged to begin preparing now. OL will continue to share updates, training opportunities, and application timelines through official DBHDS communications as decisions are finalized during the General Assembly session.

What change is being proposed in the Governor's budget?

The Governor's budget proposes delaying full implementation of the Medicaid behavioral health redesign until January 2027.

What new licenses are planned?

- MH Non-Center-Based Community Psychiatric Support & Treatment (Adults)
- MH Non-Center-Based Community Psychiatric Support & Treatment (Children & Adolescents)
- MH Center-Based Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC)
- MH Center-Based Recovery & Empowerment Center (Adults) (Clubhouse model)

Does this change OL's current work or timelines?

At this time, the operational impact on new license timeframes is not yet fully known. OL will continue moving forward under the current implementation schedule and will inform providers of any changes.

Will training on how to submit an application be offered for new service applications?

Yes. In March, OL will provide training on how to submit applications for new services.

Is training required to submit an application?

Yes. Any provider intending to submit an application for a new service will be required to have the primary individual responsible for submitting the application in CONNECT attend the training.

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Director's Corner Continued**When is service-specific training required?**

Service-specific training is required **after** an application has been submitted and **administratively approved**, and **in order for the application to be considered a priority service application**.

Who is required to attend the service-specific training?

The provider must ensure that the staff responsible for understanding and implementing the regulatory requirements for the requested service attend the required training(s).

What is covered in the service-specific training?

The training addresses the regulatory requirements, expectations, and compliance standards applicable to the specific service(s) for which the provider has applied.

Is the training required for all new services?

Yes. Service-specific training is required for each new service applied for, as applicable.

What is the proctored knowledge exam?

The proctored knowledge exam assesses the provider's understanding of the regulatory requirements covered in the service-specific training.

When must the knowledge exam be completed?

The exam must be successfully completed after the required training(s) and in order for the application to be processed as a priority service application.

What does "successfully pass" mean?

Successfully passing means achieving the minimum score established by the Office of Licensing for the exam, which is 85%

What happens if a provider does not pass the exam?

If the exam is not successfully passed, the provider should take time to rereview the regulatory requirements and sign up to take the proctored exam again at a future date.

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Director's Corner Continued**Does this process replace inspections or other licensing reviews?**

No. This process supplements, but does not replace, inspections, documentation reviews, or any other licensing requirements.

What should providers be doing now?

Providers are encouraged to begin preparing early by monitoring communications from DBHDS and DMAS, reviewing upcoming emergency regulations and Behavioral Health Redesign guidance, identifying licenses that may transition, preparing documentation, reviewing staffing requirements, and ensuring appropriate staff have access to CONNECT.

How will providers receive updates?

OL will notify providers of training, when applications will be accepted, and other licensing deadlines through official DBHDS communications and OL Constant Contact notifications. However, timelines remain subject to change during the General Assembly session.

A Year in Numbers

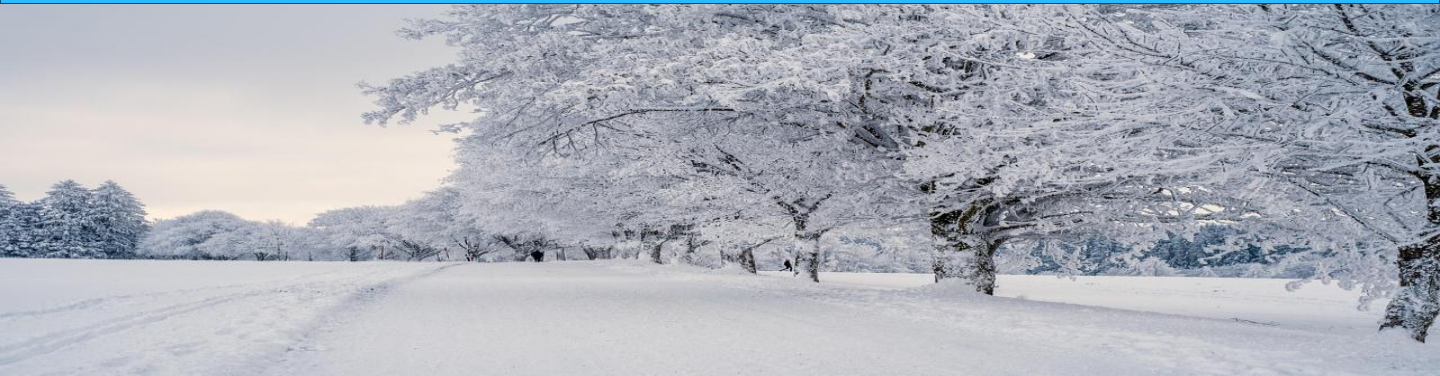
Between January 1st and December 31st, 2025, the Office of Licensing approved 976 location modifications and 613 service modifications; and licensed approximately 637 new providers. During that same timeframe, the OL conducted approximately 1,310 investigations and completed 3,442 inspections. There were 25,454 death or serious incidents (DSIs) reported to the department and of these, 1,485 met the individual care concern threshold criteria. Additionally, during this timeframe, 96.44% of DSIs were reported on-time.

We sincerely thank all providers for their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to high-quality care, which ensures the safety and well-being of those we serve.

Jae Benz

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CONNECT Reminders



- ✓ If you have submitted an Initial or Modification Application, you may receive a Deficiency Letter that outlines additional information or revisions required for approval. If you have uploaded the requested documents, ***please ensure you have completed the following steps to return the application for review:***
 - ✓ Scroll down on the application screen and sign the application.
 - ✓ For Initial Applications: Click the “Update Initial Application” button.
 - ✓ For Modification Applications: Click the “Update Modification Application” button.
- ✓ The best way to communicate with Policy Review Specialists and Modification Specialists is via the CONNECT Messaging Portal. ***Allow 24-48*** hours for a response.
- ✓ A license will **close** on the expiration date if a provider fails to submit a renewal application. If that happens, the provider must apply for a new license.
- ✓ Remember to remove Protected Health Information (PHI) **and Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** in Corrective Action Plan responses. This includes **individual names** and **staff names**. CAPs containing PHI **or PII** will not be accepted and will need to be edited by the provider before approval.
- ✓ Authorized Contacts in the Provider Portal must be kept up to date so that all CONNECT communications can be managed in a timely manner and to ensure appropriate access to the Provider Portal Dashboard.
- ✓ The **CONNECT** Help Desk can offer support with issues directly related to the **CONNECT** System. For issues related to licensing, the provider should contact their assigned Licensing Specialist or licensingadmins@dbhds.virginia.gov.

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Modification Type/Menu	When to Submit This Type of Application
<p>Add New Service</p>	<p>This type of notification, along with the required supporting documentation, will need to be submitted if a provider wants to add a NEW service/license.</p> <p>This option is found at the top of the Active Licenses on the Provider Portal Dashboard.</p>
<p>View/Add New Location</p>	<p>This type of modification, along with the required supporting documentation, will need to be submitted if a provider wants to add an additional location to an existing service OR relocate a service requiring a change in physical address from one location to another.</p> <p>*If a provider is changing their address (moving their current location to another physical location), the provider will also need to submit an Information Modification to close the current location/address (see below).</p> <p>Note for Sponsored Residential Services: If a provider currently holds a license for a sponsored residential service, they will not submit a location modification to add the location. The sponsored provider will need to follow the Sponsored Provider Certification Process Memo.</p> <p>Please use this Updated Sponsored Residential Certification Form when requesting to add additional Sponsored Residential Locations.</p>
<p>Information Modification</p>	<p>This type of modification, along with the required supporting documentation, must be submitted to make general changes. The appropriate information modification type must be selected for the Office of Licensing to process your request for change. If the correct information modification type is not selected, the Information Modification will be withdrawn by the OL and the provider will be advised to resubmit.</p> <p>The Information Modification can be submitted for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider Name Change (include SCC certificate) • Organizational Structure Change (include organization chart) • Close Provider Organization • Service Description Change • Geographical Area Served Change • Population Served Change (Age, Gender, Disability) • Close Service or Number of Beds or Capacity Change • Demographic Information Change • Building or Home Modification Change • Close Location • Other Modification (Use for changing Main Authorized Contact) <p>This menu option is found to the left of the Provider Portal Dashboard screen in the blue menu box.</p>

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CONNECT Live Demonstrations

CONNECT: [Provider Portal Overview Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [Provider Portal Overview PowerPoint](#)

CONNECT: [Adding Locations Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [Adding Locations PowerPoint](#)

CONNECT: [Adding Services Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [Adding Services PowerPoint](#)

CONNECT: [Corrective Action Plans Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [Corrective Action Plans PowerPoint](#)

CONNECT: [Correspondence and Messaging Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [Correspondence and Messaging PowerPoint](#)

CONNECT: [Information Modification Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [Information Modification PowerPoint](#)

CONNECT: [License Renewals Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [License Renewals PowerPoint](#)

CONNECT: [Managing Contacts Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [Managing Contacts PowerPoint](#)

CONNECT: [Password Management and Variance Applications Recorded Webinar](#)

CONNECT: [Password Management and Variance Applications PowerPoint](#)

To submit a CONNECT Help Desk ticket, please click here:

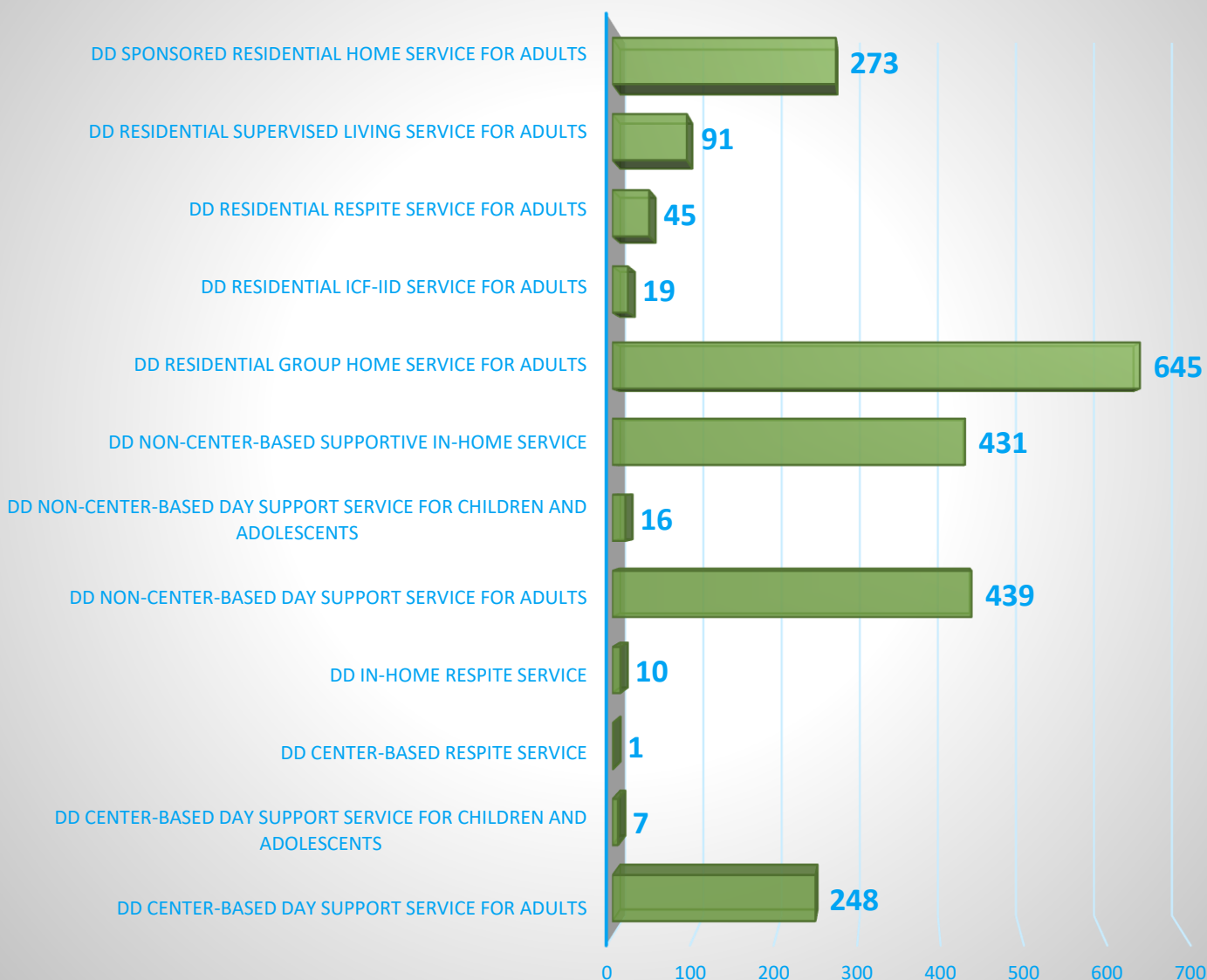
<https://dbhds.virginia.gov/clinical-and-quality-management/office-of-licensing/> and
select CONNECT Help Desk

Link to CONNECT Provider Portal:

<https://vadbhdsv7prod.glsuite.us/GLSuiteWeb/Clients/VADBHDS/Private/LoginDashboard/Login.aspx>

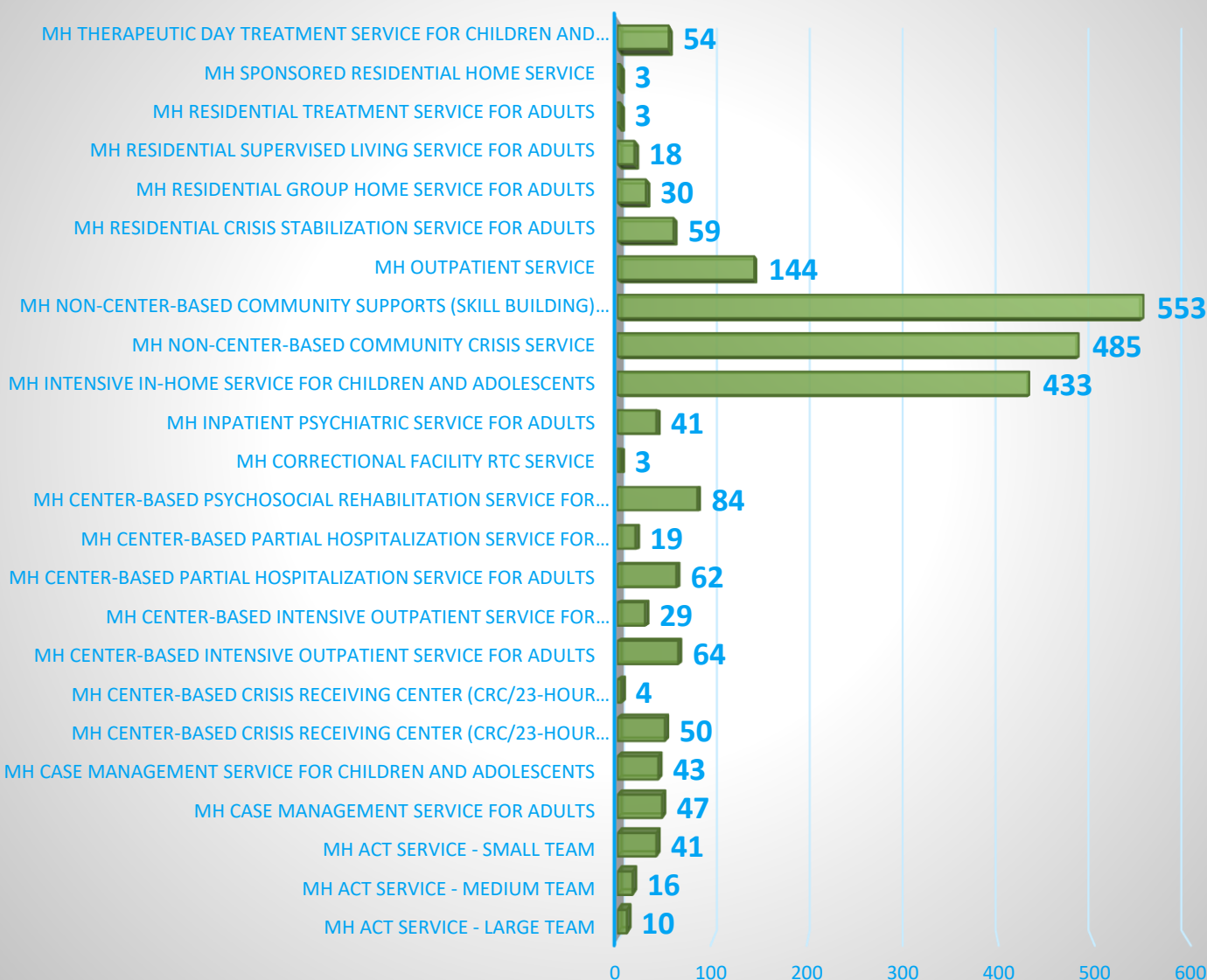
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Number of Licensed Developmental Services in Virginia as of 1/1/26



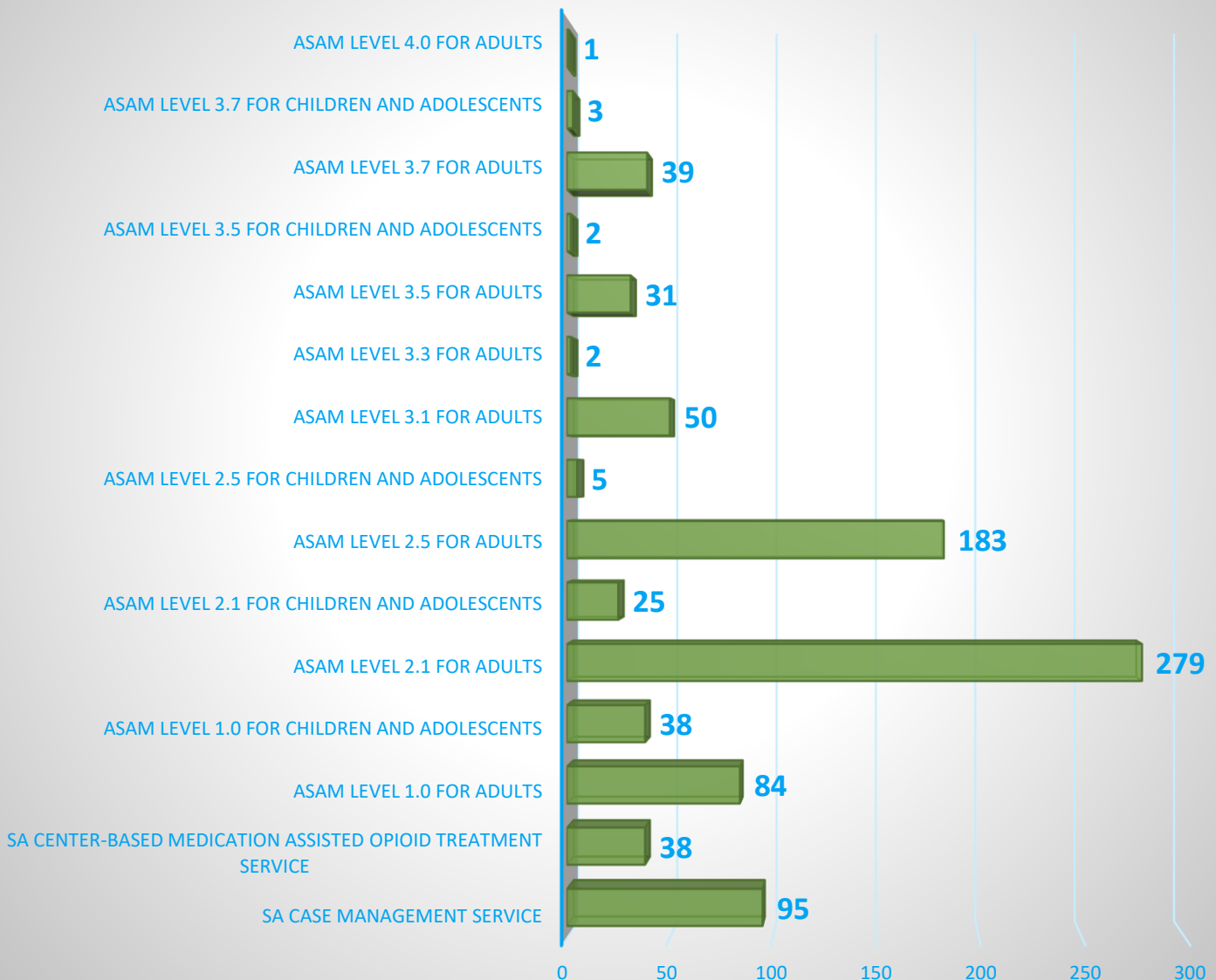
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Number of licensed Mental Health Services in Virginia as of 1/1/26



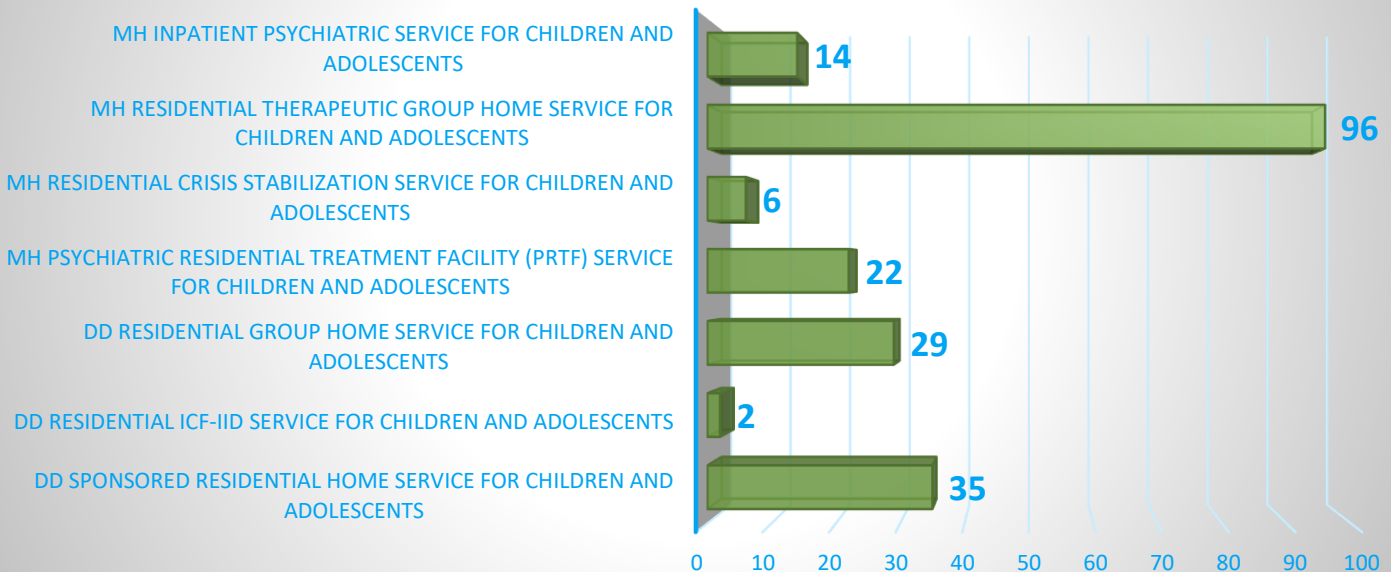
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Number of Licensed Substance Use Services in Virginia as of 1/1/2026

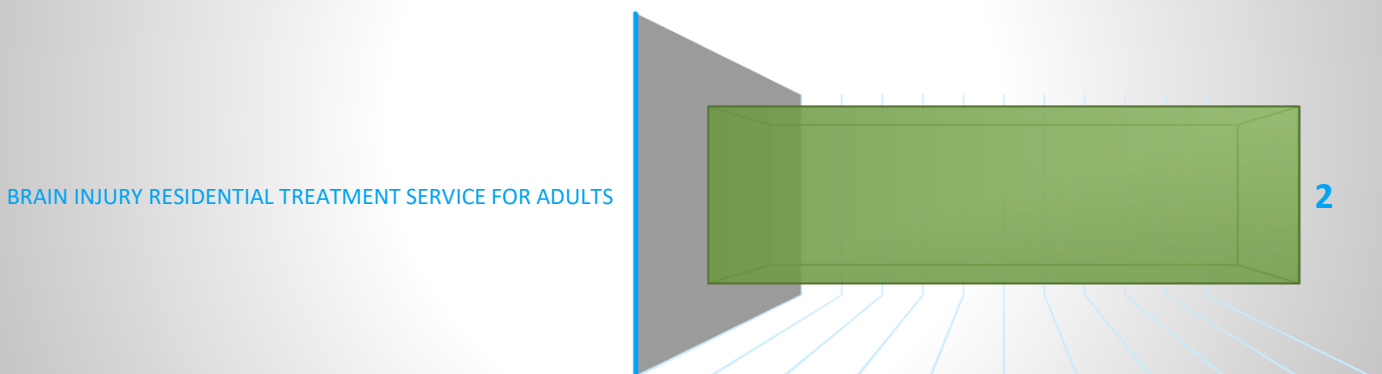


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Number of Licensed Children's Residential Services in Virginia as of 1/1/26



Number of Brain Injury Residential Treatment Services in Virginia as of 1/1/26



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How to reach the Office of Licensing for CONNECT Help and other Support Issues

Type of Question	Contact	To Report an Issue
Questions related to your licensed services(s)	Licensing Specialist	Please navigate to the DBHDS Office of Licensing webpage and find the Office of Licensing Staff Contact Information or find this information on the Provider Portal Dashboard ,
Questions related to the CONNECT licensing system or if you are the Main Authorized Contact (MAC) in need of a password reset	CONNECT Help Desk	Please navigate to the DBHDS Office of Licensing webpage and find the CONNECT Help Desk button to report an issue or email: licensingconnectinquiry@dbhds.virginia.gov
Questions related to reporting a serious incident	Office of Licensing Incident Management Unit	Please contact the Incident Management Unit at: incident_management@dbhds.virginia.gov
Questions related to background checks	Office of Background Investigation Unit	Please contact the DBHDS Background Investigations Unit at: malinda.roberts@dbhds.virginia.gov or belinda.turner@dbhds.virginia.gov
Questions related to licensing regulations & policy inquiry	Office of Licensing Administrative Support	Please contact the Office of Licensing at: licensingadminsupport@dbhds.virginia.gov
Complaints	Office of Licensing Legal & Regulatory	Please use the CONNECT portal to submit a complaint related to a DBHDS licensed provider.
Questions related to the Computerized Human Rights Information System (CHRIS)	Delta Production	Please contact a DELTA Security Officer at: deltaprod@dbhds.virginia.gov