



**D**isability  
**R**ights  
**M**aryland

Empowerment. Integration. Equality.

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## **Abuse and Neglect of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities**

## What is DRM?

- The former Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC)
- Protection and advocacy organization (P&A)
- Federal law empowers P&A to provide legal representation and monitor state-licensed facilities to ensure legal rights and safety of individuals with disabilities
- DRM services are free

# **Disability Rights Maryland (DRM)**

## New VOCA grant recipient

## Developmental Disabilities in Maryland

- Developmental disabilities can be either physical or intellectual, but generally require that an individual be provided with external support or regular assistance in order to live independently
  - *Examples:* autism, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome

## Developmental Disabilities in Maryland (con't)

- In Maryland, services provided through Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), a subset of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)
- Trend towards integration with the community (HCBS)
- State-licensed provider agencies deliver care through a broad range of home and community based services

## Developmental Disabilities in Maryland (con't)

- Historically vulnerable population with limited access to the criminal justice system
- Individuals with disability are at an increased risk of violence and abuse
- DHMH (OHCQ) investigates provider agencies
- Provider agencies self-report instances of abuse, neglect, death, injury, unauthorized restraints, or unanticipated hospitalizations
- DRM has access to provider and OHCQ reports

# DRM's VOCA work on abuse

## Sexual Abuse

- Sexual assault by staff
- Sexual assault by another individual receiving DDA services
- Sexual assault by a third-party
- 2015 regulations on sexual abuse prevention (COMAR 10.22.17) need enforcement, robust training for both staff and individuals

## Physical/Psychological Abuse

- Physical or psychological abuse by staff, undermines promise of safe environment
- Verbal/psychological abuse by staff
- Medication of individuals without consent

# DRM's VOCA work on neglect

## Neglect

- Staff support is critical to empowering individuals with developmental disabilities to live integrated and full lives
- Failure of staff to show up or negligence by staff can leave an individual without access to food, personal support, or the community
- Failure to coordinate between different providers can lead to further isolation and hamper an individual's ability to access the community

# Future VOCA work

## **Opportunities for future VOCA work**

- Access to courts for individuals with disabilities
- Combatting abuse and neglect of individuals in nursing homes
- Combatting abuse and neglect of individuals with mental health conditions

## Contact Information

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