



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SC Department of Mental Health's Division of Public Safety Announces On-site Accreditation Assessment**

Columbia, SC – A team of assessors from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) will begin an accreditation assessment of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health's (SCDMH) Division of Public Safety on February 14, 2022.

The accreditation program requires law enforcement agencies to comply with professional standards in the following areas: policy and procedures, administration, operations, and support services.

As part of the assessment, agency employees and the public are invited to offer comments at a public information session Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 3:00pm. The session will be conducted virtually through a Microsoft Teams session. If you wish to participate in the virtual session, please contact Jennifer Kats at [PublicSafety@scdmh.org](mailto:PublicSafety@scdmh.org).

Agency employees and the public are also invited to offer comments to the Assessment Team by calling the assessment team at (800) 774-2362 on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, between the hours of 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Telephone comments and public session appearances are limited to 10 minutes and must address the Agency's ability to comply with CALEA's standards, a copy of which is available at the Division of Public Safety, 7901 Farrow Road, Building 17, Columbia, South Carolina, 29203.

Those wishing to offer written comments about the Division's ability to comply with standards for accreditation may send them to: The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), 13575 Heathcote Boulevard, Suite 320, Gainesville, Virginia, 20155, or via email to: [calea@calea.org](mailto:calea@calea.org).

Verification by the Assessment Team that SCDMH Public Safety meets CALEA standards as part of a voluntary process to gain accreditation – a highly prized recognition of law enforcement excellence. In order to maintain accredited status, law enforcement agencies must undergo re-accreditation every four years to ensure continued compliance with CALEA standards.

Law enforcement practitioners from similar agencies in other states will review written materials, interview individuals, and observe SCDMH facilities where compliance can be witnessed. Once the assessors complete a review of the Agency, they will report to the full Commission, which will then decide if SCDMH Public Safety will be granted re-accreditation.

The SCDMH Division of Public Safety was first accredited in 2018.

*The SCDMH Division of Public Safety is the law enforcement entity for the Agency and has statewide jurisdiction. The Division employs sworn officers and has specific responsibilities for coordinating all law enforcement, fire and life safety, and security programs within the Department, and also performs as the Agency's first responders, as necessary. The Division enforces state laws and protects SCDMH property, patients, employees, and visitors.*

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