Policy Title: 9003V.1 Pre-Screening Direct Care Staff Background Prior to Hiring
Patient Age Group: (X) N/A ( ) All Ages ( ) Pediatric ( ) Adult

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to establish a standardized and comprehensive process for the pre-screening of direct care staff at Centro Savila. This process ensures the safety and well-being of clients, while also promoting ethical practices and regulatory compliance by verifying the qualifications, criminal history, and suitability of candidates for direct care positions.

Scope
This policy applies to all individuals applying for direct care positions at Centro Savila, including but not limited to behavioral health counselors, social workers, and other staff members who will be directly involved in providing clients care or services.

Policy Statement
Centro Savila is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for clients, staff, and the community by ensuring that all direct care staff meet the necessary qualifications, comply with state and federal regulations, and uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. All direct care staff will undergo a comprehensive pre-screening process before being considered for employment.

Definitions

- **Direct Care Staff**: Employees or contractors who provide direct services to clients, including, but not limited to, therapists, and social workers
- **Pre-Screening**: A thorough assessment process that includes background checks, verification of qualifications, and a review of the candidate's professional history.

Process for Pre-Screening Direct Care Staff Background

1. **Job Posting and Application Process**
    - All job postings for direct care positions will clearly indicate that candidates must undergo a thorough pre-screening process, including background checks, before being hired.
    - Applicants must submit a completed job application, resume, and any other required documents for review.
2. **Initial Application Review**
    - The Human Resources (HR) Department will review the submitted applications to verify that candidates meet the minimum qualifications required for the position.

- If the applicant meets the qualifications, they will be notified and invited for an initial interview.

3. **Interview and Assessment**
   - Candidates who pass the initial review will participate in an in-person or virtual interview conducted by the hiring manager and a member of the HR department.
   - The interview will assess the candidate's qualifications, experience, professionalism, and fit for the role.
   - A pre-employment assessment may also be administered, if applicable, to gauge skills relevant to the position.
4. **Background Check Authorization**
   - Following the interview, candidates will be asked to sign a consent form authorizing a comprehensive background check. This consent will include:
     - **Criminal Background Check**: A nationwide criminal history report will be obtained, including any felony or misdemeanor convictions.
     - **Child and Adult Abuse Registry Check**: Verifying the applicant's history with abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults.
     - **Sex Offender Registry Check**: Ensuring the applicant is not listed on any sex offender registry.
     - **Driving Record Check**: For positions that require driving, a check of the applicant's motor vehicle record will be conducted.
     - **Professional License and Credential Verification**: Verification of any professional licenses, certifications, or credentials relevant to the direct care position (e.g., social work, counseling).
     - **Drug Testing**: Depending on the position, a pre-employment drug test may be required to ensure a safe work environment.
5. **Review of Background Check Results**
   - The HR Department will review the results of the background checks and assess whether any findings disqualify the candidate. Criteria for disqualification may include:
     - Convictions for violent crimes, abuse, or exploitation of vulnerable individuals.
     - Convictions for crimes that could impair the candidate's ability to perform essential job duties or pose a safety risk to clients or staff.
     - Violations of licensure or professional conduct that disqualify the candidate from practicing in their field.
   - If background checks reveal concerning information, the HR Department will consult with legal counsel and the hiring manager to determine whether the candidate should be disqualified.
6. **Reference Checks**
   - HR will conduct reference checks with previous employers or supervisors to verify the candidate's work history, character, and performance in previous direct care roles.
   - The candidate may also be required to provide personal or professional references that can vouch for their suitability for the position.
7. **Offer of Employment**
   - Candidates who pass all phases of the pre-screening process, including background checks, interviews, and reference checks, will be offered employment.
8. **Notification of Disqualification**
   - If a candidate is disqualified based on the background check or reference review, HR will notify the candidate in writing, outlining the reasons for disqualification in compliance with applicable state and federal laws (e.g., the Fair Credit Reporting Act).
9. **Record Keeping and Confidentiality**

- All documents related to the pre-screening process (applications, background check results, interview notes, reference checks) will be stored in the employee's confidential personnel file.
- Centro Savila will maintain strict confidentiality regarding the results of background checks, sharing them only with authorized personnel as required by law or policy.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

Centro Savila adheres to all relevant state, federal, and local laws governing the hiring process, including but not limited to the following:

- **New Mexico Criminal and Background Check Law**: Ensures compliance with state-specific background check requirements.
- **Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)**: Ensures that background checks are conducted in accordance with federal regulations, including the candidate's right to dispute inaccurate information.
- **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**: Maintains the privacy and security of personal and medical information during the hiring process.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**: Ensures that all pre-screening activities are conducted without discrimination on the basis of disability.

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed annually by the HR Department to ensure it aligns with best practices and complies with all applicable legal requirements. Updates and revisions will be communicated to all relevant staff and incorporated into training materials as necessary.

Approved by: William G. Wagner, Executive Director
Date: 11.12.24

Signature:

Item	*Date*	*Signature*
Executive Director		
Deputy Director		