



COVID-19 Response, Guidance, and Actions

Updated: March 20, 2020

Good evening,

Thank you all again for joining us on Tuesday and for your feedback. This situation is evolving quickly, and your perspectives are incredibly valuable to inform our response moving forward. We want to stay in regular contact with you all to keep you apprised of new action we are taking in response to COVID-19 and necessary updates.

1135 Waiver Update

We are preparing to submit an 1135 waiver to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and intend to do so early next week. We are still formulating exactly what will be in the application, but we anticipate waiving requirements and barriers to provider enrollment in Medicaid and CHIP, telehealth restrictions, requirements around Medicaid applications, and provisions related to behavioral health, intellectual disability programs, and early intervention.

Appendix K Waiver Update

The offices of Developmental Programs (ODP) and Long-Term Living (OLTL) [submitted Appendix K waiver applications](#) to CMS. These waivers were approved on March 18 and will expand the capacity for remote services in the long-term services and supports and intellectual disability/autism service systems. We are committed to doing everything we can to ensure continuity of services and facilitate flexibility for our partners providing services across Pennsylvania. Services for these populations cannot stop, but we want to make it easier for all of you to provide these services safely. Further operational guidance will be coming from ODP and OLTL.

Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) Visitation Guidance

Guidance was [recently issued](#) regarding visitation at DHS' state-run facilities, and we are finalizing guidance related to similar residential treatment settings that DHS licenses but does not run. The offices of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) are finalizing guidance for their RTF and other residential providers. We want to be sure that all people served and staff working in RTFs are safe during this time, and we encourage all of you to follow this guidance. If you have questions about the guidance, please contact OCYF or OMHSAS.

Licensing Update

In order to protect people served by licensed settings and providers, staff of these settings, and DHS' licensing staff, we are adjusting licensing operations with this in mind. Annual licensing inspections will be suspended for the time being, but licensing staff will continue to conduct on-site investigations for serious incidents and complaints. On-site visits may continue for facilities on provisional licenses or facilities that are appealing a revoked license. We are unable to send renewed annual licenses at this time. If you are expecting a renewed license packet and do not receive it, your existing license is still valid.

If you have questions during this period, please contact your regional office or licensing representative.

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) Update

We recognize that the disruption in operations caused by COVID-19 creates changes as providers prepare for the implementation of EVV. In light of this, we have decided to shift our implementation date to October 1, 2020. If you have questions about what this means, please email them to RA-PWEVVNOTICE@pa.gov.

FAQs

As we work to answer questions related to this situation, we are working on centralizing this into an FAQ document that will be available on our website for you all to reference. The document will be updated regularly, so I encourage you to consult this resource. And, we are working to answer all the questions that came up on the call and will be circulating those questions and responses as soon as we can.

Thank you all for your continued support and your work during this uncertain period.

Teresa Miller
Secretary of Human Services