



March 20, 2020

To: Intellectual and Developmental Disability and Behavioral Health
Services Contracted Providers

Subject: Broadcast Message No. 20.021
Informational Updates: COVID-19

Summary

The purpose of this broadcast message is to provide information on services and performance adjustments/waivers. You will also find general information and links to resources regarding COVID-19.

Supporting consumers within our service delivery system is of utmost importance. Contemplating the impact of COVID-19, we recognize that business as usual is not plausible. Please exercise all guidance provided by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and practice social distancing and disinfecting precautions as much as possible.

To provide clarity and relief, the HHS IDD-BHS Department has identified several temporary adjustments.

What We Know Today

- IDD-BH contracts and procurements are expected to continue to move forward as planned as staff works collaboratively across all HHS areas to ensure completion.
- Mental Health Performance Contract Notebook performance measures and target expectations will be relaxed.
- Expanded use of the telephone to provide services (e.g., telehealth, telemedicine) and to interview collateral contacts is encouraged. Providers must document all telephonic contacts in the client record.
- For mental health general revenue services, telephonic resources in lieu of a face-to-face assessment and reassessment may be used by providers to complete the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) and the Adult Needs and Strengths Assessment (ANSA).
- Block grant-funded mental health services may be provided utilizing teleservices.

- It is important that documentation is maintained on all services provided. We will need to work out the details on how those services get reported.

We ask that you continue to provide the required reports within the required timelines (i.e., Report 3, quarterly financials, MHFA, etc.).

What We Are Working On

- We are working closely with Medicaid leadership who is actively engaged with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to:
 - Adjust requirements for Home and Community Based Services–Adult Mental Health and the Youth Empowerment Services waiver program to allow for teleservices. More information will be coming.
 - Allow targeted case management and rehab to occur over the phone.
 - Extend medical necessity and level of care authorizations, individual service plans, and authorizations including YES and HCBS for 90 days.
 - Allow mental health consults by phone.
 - Seek appropriate waivers for all IDD programs affected, including but not limited to targeted case management and Preadmission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR).
- We are working collaboratively with HHS Regulatory to address requirements related to the allowance of teleservices in licensed substance use disorder programs.

Useful COVID-19 Resources

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Disaster Distress Helpline is a 24/7 year-round, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to COVID-19. The toll-free, multilingual and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions during a health crisis. To connect with a trained crisis counselor:

- Call 800-985-5990, for Spanish press option #2
- Text TalkWithUs to 66746
- TTY call 800-846-8517

Opioid Treatment

On Monday, March 16, SAMHSA posted COVID-19 guidance providing potential flexibility for opioid treatment programs (OTPs). The COVID-19 guidance includes

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approaches for providing pharmacotherapy for opioid use disorder patients exposed to infections and COVID-19, disaster planning, potential flexibility for take-home medication, OTP guidance for patients quarantined at home with the coronavirus and [frequently asked questions](#).

- Learn more about SAMHSA's COVID-19 guidance for opioid treatment programs [here](#).
- Users can access the Drug Enforcement Administration's guidelines on Use of Telemedicine While Providing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) [here](#).
- For the most up-to-date information on responses to COVID-19 for the Substance Use Disorder Treatment field, visit the SAMHSA [website](#).

For the latest news and developments on COVID-19, monitor the following websites:

- Texas Department of State Health Services: dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus
- Texas Health and Human Services: hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov

We are committed to supporting you and your teams and appreciate all you are doing to maintain services to the most vulnerable people you serve. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 and provide relevant updates as needed. If you have questions or concerns regarding your contract requirements, please reach out to your assigned contract manager and include your program contact, if applicable.

If you have questions about this broadcast, please email dbhs@hhsc.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

[signature on file]

Sonja Gaines, Deputy Executive Commissioner
IDD-Behavioral Health Services
Medical and Social Services Division