

ADMH Division of Developmental Disabilities

The Alabama Department of Public Health identified several counties in Alabama with presumptive positive cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by the novel coronavirus, in Alabama. COVID-19 is spread from person-to-person through droplets in the air and on surfaces that people touch, very similar to how influenza spreads.

This guidance is developed for the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Direct Service Entities (DSEs) and will be updated on a regular basis with additional answers to questions that are submitted.

Questions related to federal requirements are being discussed with the Alabama Medicaid Agency in the event changes need to occur to the Home and Community Based Services Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and Living at Home (LAH) 1915(c) waivers.

ADMH is working with AMA to develop information for the CMS Appendix K Emergency Preparedness and Response document for 1915(c) waivers that will need to be completed for waiver flexibilities during the COVID-19 crisis. Approval of the Appendix K can be retroactive so changes can be made sooner than we have official approval.

**Please email [PROVIDER QUESTIONS](mailto:shirley.hicks@mh.alabama.gov) to shirley.hicks@mh.alabama.gov
Questions and answers will be recorded on this document by date answered.**

Question: Should providers take new admissions or transfers during this time of social distancing?

Answer: Only in emergency situations with the approval of the Regional Office and on a temporary basis

Question: Can day habilitation staff work in a residential program?

Answer: Staff qualified for day habilitation may work in other waiver services provided by the same provider. During this crisis, a provider can enter into a Memorandum of Agreement to share staff as long as management (eg., personnel records, payroll, etc.) remains with the primary employer.

Question: Will the “State” help us get supplies? Supplies, Low PPE supplies; medical supplies companies are diverting orders of PPEs to hospitals – need gloves, face masks, gowns

Answer: ADMH is working with Medicaid and others to help identify suppliers. Providers should also contact their local EMA to ensure they are on a list if supplies are made available through them. Providers should keep receipts for purchases made through Amazon, etc.

Question: Will the rate continue once crisis is over?

Answer: No

Question: Will the state provide staff if DSP are not able to come to work?

Answer: Alabama Service Providers Association (ASPA) has agreed to host a website as a resource for potential employees to preview the webpage hosting employment related information, visit Website: [ASPA NOW EMPLOYMENT OPPORUNITIES](#) ; FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/ASPA.Official.2018/> Please contact Emily Stewart at estewart@voase.org # 251-604-0330 for information about how you can add your employment needs to the website! Regional Offices may also approve temporary living arrangements for those served when there is a critical need.

Question: Will Day Programs be able to bill at the residential home if they send staff there?

Answer: Please refer to DDD COVID-19 rel5 describing the funding strategy

Question: Will family/guardian be able to take individuals on a home visit during this time?

Answer: Providers should follow their Front-Line Emergency Plan and protocol. People who receive services should be made aware of any provider policy that would prevent them from receiving services. Providers should also contact the appropriate Support Coordinator to make them aware of the family's possible desire to make changes in services.

Question: Pre-employment TB Skin tests – difficult to get in many areas; local hospitals & DPH are no longer offering these. Can providers use the screening tool in lieu of skin test?

Answer: AMA is not prepared to waive requirements at this time (3/23/20)

Question: Can ADMH give a 90-extension on annual PCP Meetings, BSP Meetings, Special Team Meetings, HRC Meetings

Answer: Annual PCP, BSP and Special Team meetings should be completed to extent possible. Documentation of verbal approval should be noted until such time they can be obtained by mail. All meetings can be held via electric communications (eg., teleconference, zoom, etc.)

Question: Orientation training for new staff – especially MAC training. Can NDP regulations be relaxed? Can New Hire Orientation be streamlined?

Answer: MAC 2 has a 90-day grace period after the expiration of the certificate. Providers can use face time or zoom to complete this training and verify check off. Training must be documented to include how the training was provided. Supervisory visits can also be done via zoom or facetime and must be documented as such.

All medication errors should continue to be reported.

New Hire Orientation - training through Relias and other on-line resources are resources to accomplish training needs. DDD is researching resources and will post soon.

Question: QDDP paperwork – As Qs & Admin staff work shifts – paperwork/monthly report/PCP documents will not be a priority.

Answer: Although it may not be seen a priority, some documentation must be available to state why the task was not performed.

Question: Annual physicals for individuals & non-essential medical appointments. Can we get extension, or these required healthcare appts?

Answer: Documentation should reflect why these requirements were delayed

Question: DSP calls outs, staying home due to children out of school or showing signs/symptoms. Please provide clarification on Incentive Pay? Clarification on relaxing staffing ratios?

Answer: Incentive pay is a provider decision. In event of critical need for DSPs, changes in staffing ratios should go through the RFA process and be approved by the Regional Office. Changes in location of a service recipient should also be approved by the Regional Office.

Question: Since day habilitation facilities are closed is it possible for the day habilitation provider to use their workers to provide personal care (PC) or companion care (CC)? Does the worker have to use electronic visitation verification (EVV)?

Answer: Yes, the provider must be certified to provide personal and companion care. If the provider is certified then, it can shift the workers to provide the services. The Alabama Medicaid Agency will accept manual entry into EVV for existing PC recipients and paper time sheets for day habilitation recipients receiving PC in the home that are not already in EVV.