Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

Support Coordination Alliance
Resuming Required In-Person Support Coordinator Visits with Consumers

Frequently Asked Questions
May 2020

The following are FAQ’s regarding the resumption of in-person visits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below the question are ideas for DDD administration to consider adopting for reintroduction of required face to face visits by Support Coordinators.

1. **Has the state reached out to Medicaid to determine their opinion on waiving the 3 face to face visit requirements in a calendar year?** The concern is, if visits continue to move forward through September, an entire case load will need to be visited every month from October through December. This could potentially delay plan renewals and revisions, cause increase safety risk to all participants as SC’s increase their face to face contacts, in addition to, being impossible to accomplish for SC Agencies, causing serious compliance and financial consequences to the agencies.

   We believe DHS and state Medicaid offices should be reaching out to the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid to get their guidance on how they view the suspension of in-home visits, and how and under what guidelines should in-person visits resume.

2. **If DDD requests the resumption of face to face visits by Support Coordinators will DDD stagger the visits so no more than 1/3 of an SC’s case load per month will need a visit?**

   We believe it is unrealistic to expect an SC to be required to visit their entire case load in one month as the current moving forward of the visit schedule in iRecord now requires. Therefore, we recommend that DDD stagger the reintroduction of face to face visits so no more than 1/3 of an SC’s caseload have required visits reintroduced in each month. This will ensure all consumers will receive a visit within 3 months of resuming the monthly visit requirement. Missed home visits should take priority in setting out the resumption schedule.

3. **Will SC’s be able to be tested as priority workers to ensure they do not have the virus?**

   As broad based testing increases exponentially, if SC’s are required to do in-person visits, we believe they should be treated as priority workers and should have access to available testing, if they meet the requirements to receive a test.
4. **How do we resume visits while following the state guidelines regarding quarantining?** How do we respect the wishes of consumer, families and providers that may not want visitors in their buildings/homes while we still live with the presence of the COVID-19 virus? **Will providers and consumers/families have the right to deny visits? Will electronic visits be permissible?**

We believe any resumption of required visits must 1st ensure the health and safety of all meeting participants. This includes postponing all required visits that are scheduled to occur during a period when a household or facility is following all quarantining guidelines established by the state. We also believe respecting the wishes and concerns of consumer’s, Guardians, Families and Providers while also ensuring the general well-being of the consumer must be the fundamental principle when resuming visits. In the event a consumer, guardian, family or provider do not want a face to face visit on a premise, an alternative setting visit site should be proposed, for example, a home visit could occur outside the home, let’s say on the families’ porch or property. This will allow for social distancing between the parties and the use of masks by all parties while also allowing the SC to ensure the Consumers is well physically and emotionally.

If an alternative site is not possible, electronic visits allowing face to face interaction (zoom, Teams etc.,) should be allowed to constitute a face to face visit.

If both an in-person visit and/or electronic visit are not possible then the SC can still do a telephone visit while moving the contact visit icon to the next month.

5. **If consumer’s, guardians, families, and providers wish to have an in-person visit how will the health of consumer, guardian, family, provider and Support Coordinator be assured?** Will social distancing be required to protect consumer and SC? **Will temperatures of all attending the meeting be required? Will Consumers, Guardians, Family members, Provider Staff be required to where Personal Protective Equipment?**

If consumer’s, guardians, families, and providers wish to have an in-person meeting every effort must be made to ensure the safety and protections of all participants.

a. All participants need to ensure social distancing to the greatest extent possible is maintained during the meeting. If this is not possible then an alternative setting for the meeting should be established. If not feasible, the meeting requirement can be waived.

b. All participants need to agree to utilize DDD’s guidance for individuals and families regarding obtaining the current physical condition and exposure to someone with COVID-19 before entering a home while also agreeing to have their temperatures taken before the meeting to try to ensure they are not ill before a meeting begins. Those who answer yes to any question in the questionnaire or have a current temperature will not be able to attend the meeting. If the home is quarantined the meeting will be postponed and the meeting requirement may be waived due to COVID-19.
c. All non-participants should be required to wear PPE, including masks during a meeting. Participants will have the choice of wearing or not wearing PPE.

6. **How will the additional cost of PPE, thermometers etc. be addressed? Will the state pay for and provide PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), thermometers etc.? Will state assist in securing access to PPE and equipment for SC agencies?**

   The State is providing some PPE for Providers of Group Homes. Access to this resource should be made available to SC agencies. In addition, since the state has access to purchasing resources that are far superior to the resources of most SC agencies, we believe the state should either purchase PPE for distribution to SC agencies, or provide lists of PPE providers that SC Agencies can use to purchase PPE.

7. **Will SC agencies be protected from liability, if required to do visits and unknowingly are ill with COVID-19; can they be sued for transmitting the disease?**

   SC agencies should be included in any state or Federal law that will protect them from liability and lawsuits, if required to do in-person visits and unknowingly are ill with COVID-19 and possibly spread the disease to a consumer, provider, or family member.

8. **How do we resume visits while following the state guidelines regarding quarantining when a household or site tests positive to COVID-19? How do we respect the wishes of consumer, families and providers that may not want visitors in their buildings/homes while we still live with the presence of the COVID-19 virus? Will providers and consumers/families have the right to deny visits? Will electronic visits be permissible?**

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