



April 17, 2020

Guidance for Extended Home Visits During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In consideration of the current COVID-19 public health crisis, many people have chosen to live with their families temporarily during the COVID-19 crisis. Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) acknowledge the additional assistance caregivers may require from both their Care Managers and their residential providers to appropriately care for individuals in the home. The following guidance outlines the various resources and support families and caregivers may receive from CCOs and residential providers during an extended home visit.

Medical Needs:

- With assistance from the individual's Care Manager, access to medically necessary items and necessary personal items should be arranged immediately. Care Managers should ensure that the residential agencies continue to source and deliver medications, prescriptions and other medically necessary items and supplies to the individual while at home. Residential providers should provide the person and family with a packet that contains the necessary information and documentation that may be needed in that event.
- Medical appointments should be limited at this time due to COVID-19. With assistance from the Care Manager, families/caregivers should defer to the guidance of their medical providers regarding the utilization of tele-health or the postponement of routine appointments. If the appointment is unavoidable, the Care Manager can assist with arranging medical transportation. The Care Manager may also be able to participate in the appointment if needed through technology (video or telephone). If a hospital visit is necessary, the individual is entitled to have a caregiver or support person at his or her bedside. If the hospital does not accommodate this right, the Care Manager can assist in providing appropriate DOH guidance on this issue and if necessary, escalate the issue to OPWDD for immediate assistance.

Financial/Benefits Considerations:

- Personal Allowance regulations should be followed during this extended stay. Funds held by a residential agency on behalf of the person must be made available to the person upon their request - these funds belong to the individual and providers may not withhold them for any reason. Providers should refer to the guidelines within OPWDD's Personal Allowance Manual, with some adjustments made for logistics and other unique factors related to the COVID-19 crisis.
- Individuals remain responsible for paying rent to the residential agency while on an extended home visit. Per OPWDD, the person's residential placement will be held open for the person to return at some later point. The Care Manager will work with the individual, family and agency to come to an agreement as to a reasonable amount of money that the residential provider can provide to help the family with costs associated with having the person at home.
- The Common Benefit Identification Card (CBIC) card is used to access numerous benefits, including Medicaid, SNAP and others. The CBIC card should go with the individual during an extended home visit. By Federal law, SNAP benefits can be used for the benefit of the recipient only. Families can assist the person in using their benefits while the person is at home, but only to purchase food for the person, not the household.

Therapies/Routines/Push-In Services:

- The Care Manager will work with the residence or clinic to coordinate any essential therapy services through a telehealth model or other available modality.
- While at home, it is important that individuals maintain similar routines as maintained in the residential settings. Families can request, with assistance from the Care Manager, a list of routines and other useful care and support tips.
- Additionally, caregivers and/or the Care Manager can request a copy of the person's Behavior Plan and request guidance from the residential Behavior Support Specialist. If needed, the Care Manager can coordinate additional mental health supports for the individual to support their successful extended visit with their family.