



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 19, 2020

TO: Tim Burch, Director, Clark County Department of Family Services
Amber Howell, Director, Washoe County Human Services Agencies
Alexis Tucey, Deputy Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services

FROM: Ross Armstrong, Administrator

RE: Instructional Memo: COVID-19 Guidance Memo #2

The Division of Child and Family Services continues to work through the ever-changing response to COVID-19. We are committed to continuing to send out information as we receive it in a way that is helpful.

RESOURCES FROM THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU

The Children's Bureau has set up an informational website: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/covid-19-resources>

LETTER FROM JERRY MILNER

Jerry Milner, the Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau, sent a letter to state child welfare directors outlining some flexibility in child welfare practice and federal requirements. This includes guidance around in-home visits being conducted via videoconference, flexibility on CFSR PIP deadlines, IV-E eligibility reviews, child abuse and neglect investigations, and other legislative and regulatory flexibility. Please see the attachment for the full letter. This guidance directly supersedes the guidance in the DCFS *COVID-19 Guidance Memo #1* as it relates to federal requirements.

NEVADA'S ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO JERRY MILNER'S LETTER

DCFS is preparing a formal request to Region 9 to renegotiate the terms of the PIP. The request will include a significant but reasonable extension for PIP goals to account for the bulk of the state's staff working remotely or on administrative leave, and to allow for our attention to be focused on the important work of providing child welfare services to Nevada's children and families during this time. This will include Quarter 2 goals which would be due April 30, the case reviews scheduled in Clark County in April, and a global delay for all remaining goals. Updates will be provided throughout the negotiation of the PIP terms with Region 9 and the DC office.

DCFS Deputy Administrator Kathryn Roose is preparing a formal request to Region 9 to delay the IV-E Review scheduled in June in Washoe County from Region 9. Updates will be provided once the request has been addressed.

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

One jurisdiction asked if the modified response time for reports categorized as P3 applied to differential response. The modified priority response times do extend to Differential Response, which will follow the P3 timeframe of 7 calendar days from the receipt of the report.

CONTINUED WORK ON SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT

The Family Programs Office is operational but has moved to mostly remote working for staff. Critical work on federal compliance, policy revisions, Family First Prevention Services Act planning, and legislative implementation will continue with more reliance on technology for collaboration. Child welfare agencies are encouraged to continue to have representatives attend meetings as scheduled.

DCFS received a constituent concern regarding a cancelled ICPC home study in light of the Governor's order regarding increasing the use of telecommuting to promote social distancing. While we understand that resources are depleted and priorities are shifting, DCFS is not currently issuing guidance to suspend home studies (adoption, foster care, ICPC). Home studies may still be completed in person using proper hygiene and social distancing.

ICPC

DCFS is not issuing guidance suspending interstate travel for ICPC cases, and counties are requested to continue with ICPC activities provided the partnering states are cooperating and the activities are in the best interest of the child.

ATTACHED COVID-19 RESOURCES

Please find attached updates and information from the Administration for Children and Families (memo dated March 12, 2020), a memo from Medicaid on telehealth policies, a Telehealth Resource Guide from the Nevada Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, a guidance document from the US Department of Health and Human Services on HIPAA.

REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

The Division of Child and Family Services, Family Programs Office understands that the COVID-19 emergency continues to be an evolving situation. Agency needs or abilities may change in the event of sharply increasing staff, placement, or provider shortages. Any agency experiencing difficulty in executing essential functions should coordinate with their local Public Health Preparedness team to coordinate with the State of Nevada Emergency Operations Center for resources. For statutory, regulatory, or policy concerns or deviations, please contact Kathryn Roose at the Family Programs Office by phone (775) 301-7141 or by email (kroose@dcfs.nv.gov). Any child welfare agency may submit an emergency policy or procedure for review by the Family Programs Office for review.

In order for DCFS to track jurisdictional modifications to current practice through this crisis, the Family Programs Office requests copies of all policies, procedures, instructional memoranda, or other communications to child welfare staff, and requests jurisdiction permission to share modified operations with the other jurisdictions to facilitate practice improvement.

CC: Kathryn Roose, Deputy Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services

Attachments:

Letter from Jerry Milner

HHS Memo

Medicaid Memo on Telehealth Policy

Medicaid Telehealth Resource Guide

HHS HIPAA Bulletin