

INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 2244-MC-FFS-CVD

DATE: July 8, 2021

TO: Targeted Case Management, Case Management, Integrated Health Homes (IHH), and Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver and Habilitation Service Providers

APPLIES TO: Managed Care (MC), Fee-for-Service (FFS), Coronavirus Disease (CVD)

FROM: Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)

RE: Resumption of In-Person Assessments and Service Plan Monitoring

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2021

The Department is starting to unwind COVID-19 restrictions and resume some normal operations. This letter outlines the Department's requirements for returning to face-to-face encounters.

Beginning July 1, 2021, all assessments and service plan monitoring visits are presumed to be in person unless the member identifies that they do not want a face-to-face visit. Before a face-to-face meeting, staff should utilize pre-screening questions, wear a mask, and social distance as much as possible. **Telephonic or videoconferencing may be considered on an individual member basis when requested by the member and/or the member's guardian and not for the convenience of the HCBS provider, HCBS assessor, HCBS specialist, community-based case manager, case manager, or IHH care coordinator.** If a member requests a virtual visit instead of a face-to-face encounter, document the member's request in the member's service record. Federal flexibilities allow this action throughout the duration of the Public Health Emergency (PHE).

HCBS providers may not deny any HCBS assessor, HCBS specialist, community-based case managers, case managers, or IHH care coordinators in-person access to a member's home or other site of service for the purposes of meeting with the member to conduct assessments, service plan monitoring, and oversight. A provider denying access to a member's home or other site of service may only do so when ordered by a Governor's Proclamation or with specific written authorization from the IME, Bureau of Medical and Long Term Services and Support (MLTSS). Written authorization will be

granted on an individual basis when the request is directly related to a protecting the health of members and staff during a COVID-19 outbreak.

Pre-screening:

If an in-person visit at any location (e.g., member personal home, day habilitation, pre-vocational work service site) must be scheduled and is warranted, staff should contact the member by telephone the day of or day before the visit for a pre-visit screening to discuss the following questions. If the member answers yes to any of these questions, reschedule the appointment for another time:

- Do you currently have any of the following?
 - Fever
 - Sore throat
 - Cough
 - Nausea
 - Shortness of breath
 - Vomiting
 - Atypical symptoms
 - Diarrhea
 - Abdominal pain
- Have you experienced any of the above in the last 14 days?
- Have you or any member of your household traveled outside North America in the last 14 days?
- Have you been in contact with anyone who has traveled outside of North America in the last 14 days?
- Have you had contact with anyone who has known or possible exposure to COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
- Are you on home quarantine or isolation due to possible contact with someone with possible or confirmed COVID-19, or due to travel?
- Have you or anyone in the household recently discharged from a hospitalization due to confirmed COVID-19, or due to travel?

At this time, telehealth is defined as the use of a phone, computer, or other technology to communicate with a provider. Telehealth includes video visits and audio-only (voice) visits.

Members are not required to wear masks during face-to-face encounters, but staff must follow best practice guidelines during the visit. Members and staff are not required to be vaccinated. If the member appears ill during the visit, the assessment will need to be rescheduled.

It is important to note that when the federal PHE ends, all members will be required to participate in in-person assessments and service plan monitoring visits.

If you have questions, please contact Provider Services by email at IMEProviderServices@dhs.state.ia.us or by phone at 1-800-338-7909, or locally in Des Moines at 515-256-4609.