



Dr. Deidre S. Gifford, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner

Effective Date: March 16, 2020
Contact: Kathy Bruni @ 860-424-5177

TO: All CT Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE), Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), Personal Care Assistance (PCA), Autism, Mental Health Waiver (MHW) and Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Waiver Service providers and Access Agencies

RE: CMAP COVID-19 Response – Bulletin 12: Waiver of Certain Requirements and Temporary Procedural Changes for Home and Community-Based Waiver Programs

As an interim measure in response to the Governor’s recent declaration of a public health emergency as the result of the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus), the Department of Social Services (DSS) is temporarily waiving certain requirements for waiver service providers and adding service alternatives for dates of service from March 16, 2020 until DSS has notified providers in writing that the state has deemed COVID-19 no longer to be a public health emergency or DSS otherwise determines in writing that some or all of these specific measures are no longer needed to help protect the public health (the “Temporary Effective Period”).

CHCPE Category 5 (1915i):

- Allow virtual assessments and reassessments. Waives the face to face requirement.
- Suspend required timelines for task completion, in particular for reassessments, for the duration of the emergency.
- Waives written signature affirming agreement with person centered care.
- Permit substitution of lower level staff in a service plan such as substituting a companion for a homemaker.
- Permit increase in individual cost limits if needed to support members in the community safely.

- Permit family members to provide companion services.
- Permit Adult Day Programs to provide services virtually to include a virtual assessment of each participant and the delivery of at least two meals per day.
- Permit Mental Health Counseling to be provided electronically or telephonically.

All Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers:

- Allow virtual assessments and reassessments. Waives the face to face requirement.
- Suspend required timelines for task completion, in particular for reassessments, for the duration of the emergency.
- Waives written signature affirming agreement with person centered care plan and replacing with documentation of verbal agreement.
- Permit substitution of lower level staff in a service plan such as substituting a companion for a homemaker.
- Permit increase in individual cost limits if needed to support members in the community safely.

DDS Waivers:

- Permit exceptions to background checks for self-directed service providers.
- Pay self-directed workers during member hospitalization associated with COVID-19 for up to 30 days.
- Extend required training time frame from 90 to 180 days.
- Increase hours for Behavioral Supports, Individualized Home Supports where there are limits.
- Add Home Delivered meals as a service for individuals in their own home.
- Permit family members and legally liable relatives to provide waiver services.
- Permit retainer payments for all residential and day programs to ensure continuous operations.

Comprehensive and Individual and Family Support Waivers:

- Add group services to Individualized Home Support.
- Increase bed capacity for Continuous Residential Services.
- Provide Day Support Options in the home or via a video communication system.
- Provide Transitional Employment services in the home or via a video communication system.
- Provide Behavioral supports via a video communication system.
- Provide Senior Supports via a video communication system.
- Permit payment for Individualized Home Supports or Individualized Day Support rendered by family caregivers or legally responsible individuals.

Employment and Day Support Waiver:

- Provide Day Support Options in the home or via a video communication system.
- Provide Group Supported Employment in the home or via a video communication system.
- Provide Behavioral supports by a video communication system.
- Permit payment for Individualized Day Support rendered by family caregivers or legally responsible individuals.

Mental Health Waiver:

- Modify the service definitions of both Recovery Assistant and Community Support Programs to allow for non-face to face service provision.

Acquired Brain Injury Waivers 1 and 2:

- Eliminate the 18-hour daily limit for Companion service.
- Permit family members to provide Companion services.
- Waive initial training requirement and make the training available via video communication.
- For ABI 1 only, add Agency PCA as a waiver service.
- Permit Companion service to be provided electronically or telephonically for up to two hours per day.
- Permit Adult Day Programs to provide services via a video communication system to include a virtual assessment of each participant and the delivery of at least two meals per day. This is needed to ensure continuity of operations and address health and safety needs of waiver participants.

Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders:

- Permit family members to provide Companion services.
- Permit Mental Health Counseling to be provided electronically or telephonically.
- Permit Adult Day Programs to provide services via a video communication system to include a virtual assessment of each participant and the delivery of at least two meals per day.

To the greatest extent possible, providers should use virtual and telehealth methods to provide services. These measures are needed to ensure continuity of operations and address health and safety needs of waiver participants.

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) Updates

Effective March 16, 2020, Mental Health Counseling - Individual (1247Z) under the PCA and CHC waivers and Companion Services, per ¼ Hour (1536P) under the ABI waiver will be temporarily suspended. Providers will no longer receive new Mental Health Counseling or Companion prior authorizations (PA) in their Santrax EVV system.

Claims for Mental Health Counseling and ABI Companion services during this temporary effective period will not require a confirmed EVV visit in order to be paid. **Providers will no longer be able to bill these services through Santrax** and will need to submit

Mental Health Counseling and ABI Companion claims through the DXC provider portal or through their own billing software.

The PA process will not change. Access Agencies will continue to provide PA for these services and the PA will be visible via the DXC provider portal. Providers can access their PAs by logging into the secure site, www.ctdssmap.com, and selecting Prior Authorization then Prior Authorization Search.

Posting Instructions:

Policy transmittals can be downloaded from the Web site at www.ctdssmap.com.

Distribution:

This policy transmittal is being distributed to providers of the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program by DXC Technology.

Responsible Unit:

DSS, Division of Health Services, Community Options Unit, Kathy Bruni, Director, 860-424-5177 or Kathy.A.Bruni@ct.gov.

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