



June 2, 2020

To: Home and Community-Based Services — Adult Mental Health Recovery Management Entities
Home and Community-Based Services — Adult Mental Health Provider Agencies

Subject: Broadcast Message No. 20.052
COVID-19 Guidance to HCBS-AMH Providers — Date Extended

HCBS-AMH Recovery Management Entities

The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) encourages recovery managers to continue completing visits by telephone or telehealth until further notice. Please visit the [National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers](#) for more information on telehealth.

HCBS-AMH Provider Agencies

In Broadcast Message No. 20.039, HHSC authorized providers to deliver the following services via telephone or telehealth through May 31, 2020. **HHSC is extending authorization through June 30, 2020.**

- H0001 — Substance Use Disorder Services Assessment
- H0004 — Substance Use Disorder Services Individual
- H0005 — Substance Use Disorder Services Group
- H0038 — Peer Support
- H2023 — Employment Services Supported Employment
- H2025 — Employment Services Employment Assistance
- H2019 — HCBS Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services Individual
- H2019 — HCBS Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services Group
- H0036 — Community Psychiatric Supports and Treatment

As explained in the previous broadcast, providers may also deliver nursing care via telenursing if the nature of the care does not require face-to-face contact. Telenursing involves nursing practice via any electronic means, such as telephone, satellite or computer. Examples of telenursing include teaching, consulting, triaging, advising and providing direct services. As a reminder, nurses must comply with the Texas Nursing Practice Act and Texas Board of Nursing rules in the exercise of their telenursing practice.

It is important to note that direct care nursing services should continue face-to-face services when indicated and as appropriate. These are necessary for certain nursing tasks, such as wound care, blood draws and essential (nonroutine) blood pressure monitoring.

HHSC encourages providers to use personal protective equipment, practice social distancing and comply with CDC guidelines for face-to-face interactions, such as handwashing before and after any physical examination. Nurses should take appropriate precautions by checking their own temperature for fever, both daily and before a face-to-face with a program participant. Nurses must not conduct any face-to-face visits if they have a fever or other symptoms. Participants who require face-to-face visits should be advised to take their own temperatures before the visit, thereby enabling nurses to take appropriate precautions if indicated.

The federal HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has relaxed Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements to allow for the use of additional video capabilities to deliver services via telehealth. HHSC will recognize OCR's HIPAA enforcement discretion as it relates to telehealth platform requirements. Audiovisual platforms are recommended over audio-only platforms when possible.

Providers must document all telephonic contacts in the progress notes and client record, including a description of how the service was altered for delivery via phone and the reason why an audio-visual option was not used. Individual services may be more appropriate than group services for telephonic delivery. When delivering services via phone to a group, providers must document the purpose, goals and unique benefit of the group setting as an alternative to an individual setting.

HHSC requires providers to continue delivering all residential services (assisted living, supervised living, host home companion care and supported home living) **in person**. HHSC strongly encourages residential service providers to follow all CDC guidance regarding social distancing as well as other COVID-19 recommendations listed below.

Verified Information Sources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Texas Department of State Health Services](#)
- [Texas Health and Human Services Commission](#)

If you have questions about this broadcast, email hcbsamh.services@hhsc.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

[signature on file]

Trina K. Ita, MA, Associate Commissioner
Behavioral Health Services
Medical and Social Services Division