Behavioral health provider COVID-19 Information

HCA’s Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) created this guidance document, based on the questions presented during the weekly webinars and emails. Please see the BH FAQ available at our COVID-19 website. Please check it regularly because things change in a few hours with federal government guidance and we are still working toward a stable policy.

General Information

Success Stories – We would love to hear how you are meeting challenges, how you are finding successes by continuing to organize your communities, or ways you continue your treatment activities using telehealth platforms, or how you are continuing to help people with their recovery. Send your stories to HCADBHRBHCovid19@hca.wa.gov with the subject line: Success Stories.

Supervision Plans as required by the Medicaid BH State Plan – To provide Medicaid services, providers must submit a plan to HCA describing how they will implement and operationalize clinical supervision of all staff with less than a Master’s Degree in a behavioral health field, which include peers. This plan must be sufficiently detailed to address when and how staff will receive clinical supervision when workers are telecommuting. All plans must be sent to HCADBHRBHCovid19@hca.wa.gov with the subject line: Supervision Plans.

Targeted Testing - The COVID Response does provide for targeted testing and follow up site visits to Long-Term Care or Residential Treatment Facilities by Department of Health staff as a statewide strategy. Contact your local health jurisdiction for guidance and support for your organization. Testing should be available if someone on your staff or among your population have tested positive for COVID.

Laptop/Cell phone return policy – Laptops are to be returned after recovery from COVID-19 pandemic; however, it is not necessary to return the cell phones. These cell phones were graciously donated by a cell phone company and do not need to be returned to the Health Care Authority. The phones have 400 talk minutes and unlimited data (texting, internet). There are no fees for using the data and talk minutes already loaded on the phone. Please see the included slips that we recommend providing to your clients with the donated cell phone. The phones are iPhone pay-as-you-go and have smart-phone capabilities, making them great for tele-health!

There are no requirements to return or reimburse HCA for these phones, however it is recommended that you keep a record of who they are handed out to.

HCA is working with the Military Department and the cell phone companies to find a way to add additional minutes free of charge, but in the event that can’t happen they can be reloaded by contacting the issuing cell phone company at a cost. If we can find a way to operationalize adding minutes, etc. it might be good to have the contact information of the individuals receiving the free phones so that organizations sharing the phones can effectively get communication out about recharging the phones.

We are hoping the cell phones makes it easier for you to stay connected to your health care providers and receive services.

SAMHSA exceptions to 42CFR – HCA is interpreting the document at SAMHSA-Coronavirus to be SAMSHA’s response to state’s requests for guidance during this pandemic when there may be no way to secure written consent under the

(4/20/2020)
existing laws regarding privacy and confidentiality. This guidance is to ensure SUD treatment is not interrupted during this public health emergency.

Telehealth

ZOOM Licenses - ZOOM licenses have been procured for a 12 month period. The plan, at this point, is to revisit this distribution model as we get closer to the end of this 12 month lease.

Telehealth for unhoused population - Many of our homeless providers have been able to give individuals cell phones or been able to do homeless outreach to individuals and keep in contact with them through telephonic service delivery. Telephonic service delivery is telehealth.

Claims billing

Billing for services provided after-hours - Effective April 24, 2020, Medicaid, including the MCOs will be covering add-on codes 99050 and 99051 to reimburse providers for conducting “Tele” services outside the M-F, 8-5 time frame.

Prevention

Spring Youth Forum – On May 20, 2020, the Spring Youth Forum will be held virtually.

Treatments

Temporary increase of beds - At this time there are no waivers in place that allows a temporary increase of beds. If they want to increase beds at one location they would need to license those beds by amending their residential treatment facility license.

Behavioral health facilities (BHF) funding – The Department of Commerce is soliciting applications from eligible BHF organizations. Awardees will receive funds to implement BH capital projects. Go to BH Capital facilities application.

Recovery Support Services

Online certified peer counseling (CPC) training - Because of COVID 19, we are not able to hold our 36 hour in-person CPC trainings and we are not sure when we will be able to resume these. However, DBHR has created virtual CPC trainings and testing which will begin in May for CPC applicants who are currently working or who have job offers as peer counselors at community behavioral health agencies providing peer services. The DBHR contracted CPC training organizations will begin to send out training invitations to these individuals shortly. These virtual trainings are not a long term change to how we provide CPC trainings, but a stop gap measure to ensure that peers are able to obtain their certification and maintain their employment.

Adult Day Support or Clubhouse programs - Groups and programs that are based in milieu service delivery should follow DOH guidance on social distancing.

Resources from the Housing & Homelessness Calls through the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance
  • Updates have been made to Housing Alliance COVID-19 Resources
  • Post Moratorium zero-interest loans through Commerce for tenants to maintain tenancy: Tenancy Preservation
  • Updates have been made to Department of Commerce’s LIHEAP-LIRAP Frequently Asked Questions and Clarifications (Teaser - requirements for 14-day pay-or-vacate documentation removed, and eligible households can apply for up to $1000).
  • The Attorney General’s COVID-19 Eviction Moratorium Complaint Form must be used to file a formal complaint when a landlord is trying to evict during the eviction moratorium. Note: Please don’t use this for advocacy or other purposes.
Other Recovery Support Resources

- Foundational Community Supports – COVID-19 Strategies for FCS Providers
- Information on Mental and emotional well-being during the COVID-19 crisis can be found at COVID-19 You and your family.
- The Dept. of Health is soliciting applications for Emergency Language and Outreach Service Contracts to ensure equitable access to materials and information throughout the state. Learn more here: DOH COVID-19 Community Contracts
- Here is more general pandemic health info in over 30 languages, Covid-19 Health Literacy Project
- To learn more about the Unemployment Law Project, visit: Unemployment Law Project

General Safety Guidance
Domestic violence – this link Intimate partner violence and child abuse will help families and communities address partner violence and child abuse health concerns.

Sanitizing and disinfecting - We know it is difficult to find bottled hand sanitizer and disinfecting (bleach) wipes. However, there are other options for washing hands and disinfecting surfaces. Below is a brief explanation of other methods. In short you can use normal hand soap and water and can you can make your own disinfecting solutions.

Hand Washing:
If you have handwashing facilities readily available hand soap is the preferred option over bottled hand sanitizer. If handwashing is not readily available you can get a cooler full of warm water and make a portable washing station, or use the disinfecting (bleach) wipes which I will described next.

Disinfecting Surfaces:
Instead of “bleach wipes” you can use spray bottles with a diluted bleach or other acceptable disinfect solution (see EPA Approved Disinfectant link below). Making up spray bottles for this purpose is probably the easiest. If you really need wipes, you can dip some cleaning cloths (or paper towels) into the solution and put them in a zip lock bag for later use.

Additional resources are in the below links. Contact DOSHConsultation@Lni.wa.gov with questions.

- Disinfection Guidelines
- EPA Approved Disinfectants
- A Consultant near you