



Date: November 2, 2020

To: Community Attendant Services (CAS) Providers
Family Care (FC) Providers
Primary Home Care (PHC) Providers

Subject: Information Letter No. 20-16 **(REVISED November 2, 2020)**
COVID-19 Guidance for Community Attendant Services, Family Care
and Primary Home Care Providers

This information letter (IL) revises IL 20-16, COVID-19 guidance for Community Attendant Services, Family Care, and Primary Home Care providers. The revised IL is to provide updated guidance regarding required signatures.

Community Attendant Services (CAS), Family Care (FC), and Primary Home Care (PHC) providers are required to comply with state and federal laws, rules, regulations, and information letters regarding CAS, FC, and PHC services. The guidance in this information letter, including any suspensions from procedures currently required by rules, regulations, or policies, is effective as of March 16, 2020 and will continue until HHSC notifies providers otherwise.

In response to COVID-19, HHSC will allow CAS, FC, and PHC providers to suspend face-to-face supervisory visits and instead conduct interdisciplinary team (IDT) meetings by telephone or by videoconference.

Supervisory Visits

CAS, FC, and PHC providers may suspend face-to-face supervisory visits required for service plan development, annual reassessments, or to allow additional hours on the service plans.¹ In addition, CAS, FC, and PHC providers may suspend face-to-

¹ 40 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §47.65(a), Relating to supervisory visits for annual reassessments

face supervisory visits required for transfers.² CAS, FC, PHC providers should conduct these visits by telephone or videoconference.

For supervisory visits conducted by telephone or videoconference, HHSC will permit documented verbal consent as an alternative to obtaining required signatures³ that are not obtained by mail or electronically. If a signature is not obtained by mail or electronically, the provider must document in the individual's file:

- the date of supervisory visit held by telephone or videoconference;
- the reason for the supervisory visit and what was discussed; and
- if the individual is in agreement with the purpose of the contact.

Inter-Disciplinary Team (IDT) Meetings

CAS, FC, and PHC providers may conduct IDT meetings⁴ by telephone or by videoconference.

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

Limited Entry of Non-Essential Persons

CAS, FC, and PHC providers are advised to educate individuals and family members about the need to limit the number of people entering the home of the individual receiving services. Providers should encourage individuals to deny persons entry into their home if they:

- have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat;
- within the last 14 days, have had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 or are under investigation for COVID-19;

² 40 TAC §47.69, Relating to service requirements for transfers

³ 40 TAC §47.25, Relating to attendant orientation; §47.45, relating to pre-initiation activities; §47.69, relating to transfers and §47.73, relating to annual reauthorizations for the CAS program

⁴ 40 TAC §47.49, Relating to IDT meetings

- within the last 14 days, have traveled to [states with sustained community transmission](#); or
- within the last 14 days, have traveled internationally to [countries with sustained community transmission](#).

Avoid Leaving the Home

Governor Abbott issued order [GA-28](#) on June 26th, [GA-29](#) on July 2nd and [GA-30](#) on September 17th. The order provides guidelines and suggested recommendations for individuals leaving their homes for non-essential activities. Providers should educate individuals receiving services about the Governor's Order and recommended movement for their own safety and health.

Follow State and Federal Guidance

CAS, FC, and PHC program supervisors must follow guidance issued by:

- The [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC)
- [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#)
- The [Texas Department of State Health Services](#) (DSHS)
- Texas [HHSC](#)
- Governor Gregg Abbott
- Your local public health department
- Your local government guidance

Helpful information from these sources includes a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) from the CDC and DSHS has also published [COVID-19: Guidance for Public Health Home Service Providers](#).

PHC, CAS and FC attendants must continue to follow the guidance provided in [COVID-19: Guidance for Community Attendants and In-Home Caregivers](#), including guidance about the required screening of service providers and persons with legal authority to enter the residence.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact the CAS, FC, and PHC Policy team by emailing CCADPolicy@hsc.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

[signature on file]

Michelle Erwin
Deputy Director of Policy and Program
Medicaid and CHIP Services