



Notes from 5.4.20 COVID TA Call

- **State Dept. Representative Updates, if attending**

- Cathy Stopfer with CDPHE talked about the onsite surveys CDPHE is doing on ICFs/Group Homes.
 - Infection Control Surveys: Governor Polis has tasked CDPHE with doing these. There are 120 group homes and 20 ICFs. 60% of COVID deaths are happening in long-term residential facilities. Surveyors have been training for infection control procedures to safely enter group homes, wearing appropriate PPE, and hope you will be taking temps/screening, tracking everyone who comes inside, etc. Surveyors will look at your PPE and determine if you have enough and try to help if not.
- Q: Where is the documentation for the IC surveys (Governor's order)?
 - Attached to the public health order. Cathy will get back to us with the specific documentation.
- Q: Can you please clarify if this also includes 3 bed host homes?
 - No; just GRSS settings, RCFs.
- Q: Would you consider conducting these surveys virtually?
 - CDPHE did consider this but the Governor's task force sent an order last week that they can no longer be remote.
- Q: I understand testing is being prioritized for larger (100+) nursing homes. Do you have a rough timeline for when testing becomes available for our group homes? 1 month? 6 months? 12 months?
 - No timeline yet.
- Q: If an employee has a COVID positive family member and they quarantine for 14 days and are not showing symptoms, we cannot get them tested to return to work unless they showed symptoms. How do we navigate this?
 - One member replied that Jefferson County courthouse has drive-up testing for first responders and caregivers.
 - Another member replied that they have worked with our local health department and are getting 5 test kits to have on hand to use at their discretion. They are offering the same to all larger LTC facilities in Mesa County. They are providing training to our nurses on how to administer the test today.
 - There are a lot of places in the metro area that will test healthcare workers.
- Q: To clear a positive COVID case for a person served, are you expecting two tests 24 hours apart as recommended by CDC or can they do the non-test procedure?
 - They can do the non-test procedure because CDPHE is having difficulty getting the two tests. 10 days following onset of symptoms and 3 days without a fever having not taken any fever-reducing medications.
- Q: Can you clarify the non-test procedures. You mentioned 10 days with 3 days without fever. Wasn't it 7 days from onset of symptoms with 3 days without fever?
 - CDC is continually changing this; this changed about a week and a half ago to 10 days with 3 days without fever.
- Q: Have you considered antibody testing? Quest Diagnostics is offering antibody testing.
 - Cathy will follow up with their epidemiologist.
- Current CDC return to work guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html>
- Free LTC frontline staff training webinars – free <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care-strategies.html>

- Thank you for all the good work CDPHE is seeing from our members.
- **Alliance Updates**
 - A-Team News will resume tomorrow, 5/5/20, and every Tuesday at 4:00pm. This is strictly a Member-only communication and includes more than just COVID News.
 - We will continue daily COVID updates via email, if needed. Otherwise we will publish a weekly public COVID newsletter every Monday at 4:00pm.
 - Alliance is working with ANCOR on a PR strategy related to COVID. Our Board President will be writing a letter that we are looking to get published. We also have other members who may be writing letters to the editor. We plan to finalize our PR campaign early this week. We might be setting up a quick PR Committee call, but deadlines are moving fast. If you are interested in learning more, or writing a letter to your local paper's editor, contact Josh ASAP. We want to all have a unified message and strategy!
 - Weekly PPE Update
 - The state will be referencing the CDPHE PPE survey, Isolation Plans, and COVID in-person surveys of group homes/ICFs to measure the need for PPE, supplies, and testing.
 - Please follow the 4-step process for obtaining PPE. It is important you submit requests to the state, so they can order, track, and ship PPE throughout the state. Step #4 is to reach out to Kylie with emergencies. View steps here under the PPE section:
<https://www.alliancecolorado.org/covidissuedirectory>
- **Colorado Legislative Report by Emma Hudson Consulting and Colorado Legislative Strategies**
 - Emma sent Capitol Chronicles twice last week, one on Monday and one on Friday. You can view them here: <https://www.alliancecolorado.org/communications>.
 - We now have more information about how the JBC may address some of the budget cuts that we know are coming. Every Department across the state received a new figure-setting document. Top half of the documents include recommended cuts from the JBC Staff. Mostly consisted of programs that have not been implemented yet, supplementals that have not made it out yet, or anything new things that would increase spending. The second half of the document is just the beginning of what they may have to look at cutting if the May 12th forecast comes in as bad as it is expected to be. IDD – common policy provider rates will be discussed this afternoon. Included in the JBC Staff recommendation is a removal of 1.9% rate increase that we had hoped to see this year but will not.
 - In HCPF, they removed all or most of the targeted rate increases for this year except for the CHRP rates. At the moment, JBC staff is not recommending removing the CHRP rate increase so we hope that remains as such. No longer doing our END THE WAIT bill this year. Removing the Community Choice First bill, among other things. We could see a 25% cut to state programs like FSSP, state SLS, etc. Could freeze DD enrollments. As written, it does not sound like emergency enrollments would freeze, but rather to freeze churn enrollments.
 - EI – JBC Staff recommendation is to take the appropriation down to initially what the state asked for, then further down to last year's total allocation including the supplemental. If they must go below that amount, then staff is looking at going back to last years budget for EI, minus last year's supplemental.
 - JBC is meeting all day every day this week and next and making quick decisions. Senator Rankin is not in favor of completely sweeping the cash fund to fill holes in the budget.
 - Wednesday morning, the JBC is working on HCPF budget and Friday is DHS. We will send notes afterwards.
 - Because of all our hard work on END THE WAIT, the JBC is very engaged in our issues and we hope that continues to benefit us.
- **Governor's Office Updates**
 - Governor's press conference will be at 1:30pm today. Live on his FB Page.
 - We will let members know if anything important comes out.
- **CDHS: OEC Update**
 - In alignment with the Governor's Safer at Home order, the Early Intervention (EI) program has issued guidance to Community Centered Board (CCB) early intervention programs and direct service providers that all EI activities will continue through virtual means (telehealth, phone, etc.) until further notice. This includes eligibility evaluations, service coordination, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings and direct services.

- OEC has convened a group of stakeholders, including direct service providers, to plan for reinstating in-person home visits when it becomes safe to do so. Alliance has a member representative on that committee and will be providing updates to membership.
- Please note that the **Office of Early Childhood does not authorize EI in-person visits at this time** and agencies not abiding by this direction will be out of compliance with Colorado's Early Intervention [COVID-19 Guidance](#) and out of alignment with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's [guidance for home health and personal care providers](#).

- **CDPHE Updates**

- CDPHE Infection Control In-Person Surveys for ICFs and Group Homes: The Governor's Strike Force have requested unannounced surveys of nursing facilities, ICFs, and group homes. All surveyors have PPE and the most common deficiency is the misuse of PPE. The purposes of the surveys are:
 - Check on Public Health/Executive Order compliance
 - Observe procedures
 - Answer any questions
 - WE have heard many concerns about this directive. As agencies are trying to keep people safe and keep people out of their group homes, the state is bringing people in. After chatting with CDPHE on Friday, we learned a bit more about the surveys:
 - They cannot do remote (zoom) surveys.
 - This is a Governor directive and you cannot refuse the survey or entry of the surveyors.
 - CDPHE assured us again surveyors are being strictly monitored for COVID symptoms before they enter any home and they each have high-grade PPE.
 - Surveyors will be limiting their time in the home, it will be less than three hours, but likely closer to an hour and a half. They will well be social distancing and will probably not go into bedrooms. They will conduct any follow-up with staff remotely.
 - CDPHE surveyors are deemed "essential" and are not required to comply with the governor's new state employee travel restrictions.
 - Overall, this survey should be a lot less of an administrative burden than a normal CDPHE survey.
 - We have been asked what providers can do to push back on this. CDPHE suggested contacting the Governor at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/CovidConcerns>.
- COVID Testing: CDPHE, in partnership with the National Guard, is now testing largest-sized nursing facilities that do not have outbreaks, they are testing all the staff, and residents that have been out of the building and returned. They want to get ahead of any large outbreaks.
 - CDPHE is testing large nursing facilities without outbreaks first. 100+ people facilities. As we get more tests, they plan to expand to smaller facilities like group homes.
 - Alliance has been expressing concerns with HCPF and CDPHE about the need for testing in Group Homes and IDD facilities. We are told once the state has more tests they hope to be moving to smaller facilities, including IDD facilities.
- Facility Isolation Plans: They were due May 1. – get those plans in today if you missed the deadline!
 - [Amended Public Health Order 20-20: Restricting Visitors at All Colorado Nursing Facilities, Assisted Living Residences, and Intermediate Care Facilities \(PDF\)](#)
 - Facilities will submit those isolation plans to: COVID-19FacilityIsolationPlan@state.co.us
 - To assist with plan development, a template has been developed and can be located here: Isolation Plan Template. A new web page has also been created to provide direction and guidance for long term care and residential facilities. To view this page, which contains the public health order, facility guidance, and other resources visit <https://covid19.colorado.gov/lctf>.

- **HCPF Updates**

- One memo released Friday – 8% rate increase for nursing & ICF-IID – rate increase will be added to the per diem rate for each ICF-IID.
- Six memos in queue for this week, related to:
 - Transition coordination activities
 - Resuming day programs

- Options counseling
 - Federal COVID-19 stimulus payments
- HCPF's Friday webinar highlights:
 - Expecting Medicaid enrollment surge, mostly those who lost ER-sponsored coverage – not as costly as it could be.
 - Executive Order for mandatory reduction in spending of \$228M statewide. \$180M Reversion from HCPF (- increased payments to certain services, -MOE for CHP+, +6.2 FMAP bump, decreased utilization)
 - In context of need for budget cuts: protect our most vulnerable, tier budget cuts, and collaborate with stakeholders.
 - Increasing inspections for residential facilities by 50%, streamlined surveys lasting 1.5 hours. ICFs and Group Homes need to complete their isolation plans.
 - Residential settings strike force update
 - Goal is to limit spread of virus among residential settings.
 - Tests: Running up to 3,000 tests per day statewide, with goal of 8,500 per day by end of May. Strategic use of testing resources by targeting settings that have no reported cases and that are larger/high density.
 - Free LTC frontline staff training webinars – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care-strategies.html>
 - Staffing update – Connect to Care website Colorado will pilot. Tailored to needs of LTC employers and job seekers, targeting nursing/ACL/group homes first, then expand to others. Providers will list open positions; applicants will be matched. Launching today.
 - Qs answered in chat box:
 - SPALs will be increased to accommodate increased rates.
 - Level 7 rate adjustments: there will be a rollout all at once for existing PARs and rates will be increased automatically.
 - Respite vs a family member's ability to take someone out of the house – we are still working with HCPF to clarify those conflicting pieces of guidance.
 - HCPF will provide as much notification time as possible regarding the end of retainer payments, depending on CMS guidance.
 - Q: Is there a date when employment and mentorship services can begin working with clients in the community?
 - No certain date yet. Take as much precaution as you can and given that retainer payments are still be paid, you should continue to provide the services remotely to be safe. Continue to follow existing HCPF guidance.
- **CDLE update**
 - None at this time related to IDD Providers.
- **Federal Updates**
 - ANCOR report came out from survey they sent a couple weeks ago on how IDD Providers have been impacted financially to make the best case possible for additional federal funding – working on getting CO-specific data. ANCOR continue to pressure congress to add funding for us in the 4th funding package.
 - Caveat is that the timing of when that survey data was collected may create issues because rate increases were authorized after that survey.
 - Josh/Ellen received CO data this morning and will be reviewing with our team.
- **Q&A**
 - Our local dept of public health is recommending that CDPHE surveyors do not come into our homes. But they have offered to be contacted and address the issues with us locally. Would CDPHE consider this?
 - *(This question will be sent to CDPHE.)*
 - Does the guidance continue limiting visitors, family, natural supports in Host homes? Yes. Please continue the current practice of limiting visitors and follow the guidance:
 - Memo for this: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/HCPF%20OM%2020-035%20Operational%20Information%20for%20HCBS%20Residential%20Services%20Pertaining%20to%20COVID-19.pdf>

- Which memo talks about the SPAL increases?
 - Not in a memo but we got an email from Bonnie Silva that they are already increased and when the rate sheet is updated, you will see the increase there.
 - <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DD%20SLS%20CES%20Enhanced%20COVID-19%20April%202019-2020%20Rate%20Schedules%20v1.1.pdf>
 - Here is the page with all the rates listed: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/provider-rates-fee-schedule>