

MEMO

To: DAIL Provider Network

From: Megan Tierney-Ward, Deputy Commissioner 

Date: March 25, 2020

Re: New Executive Order - Essential Services

In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, new [Executive Orders](#) from Governor Scott provide new restrictions on Vermonters starting March 25, 2020. This DAIL memo reinforces the new orders and guidance already provided to providers in the [DAIL memo](#) on March 17, 2020 about “essential” and “non-essential” services.

To be clear, with regards to the [Executive Order](#), all Designated Home Health Agencies, Designated Agencies, Specialized Service Agencies, Traumatic Brain Injury providers and Independent Direct Support workers providing services under the Choices for Care, Developmental Disability Services, Traumatic Brain Injury, Attendant Services and Medicaid Adult High Tech programs are considered “healthcare service providers” and “caregivers” of essential services. Area Agencies on Aging and providers of Home Delivered Meals are also considered essential as “providers of necessities and services to economically disadvantaged populations.” With that, in order to honor the intent of the most recent order from Governor Scott to mitigate and slow the spread of COVID-19, it is absolutely critical that providers continue to identify essential services and essential service provision with the health and safety of both staff and recipients in mind.

As a reminder, “Essential Services” are services that assure the health and safety of a person. Essential Services delivered in-person to a consumer may continue if the services cannot be provided in an alternate, remote way such as telephone/facetime. All in-person service delivery must follow precautions previously set forth and found on the [DAIL COVID-19 web page](#).

Examples of “essential services” include:

- Nursing services including delegated special care procedures
- Personal Care and support for activities of daily living
- Clinical and behavioral supports essential to personal health and safety
- Medication management
- Food provision and meal preparation (including Home Delivered Meals)
- Obtaining essential home supplies related to health and sanitation
- Therapies deemed clinically necessary such as acute post-op care and wound care.

Non-essential, in-person services that do not directly contribute to health and safety shall be suspended until further notice. Non-essential services may continue if alternative, remote, methods of delivery are available. The determination must be made by the provider of services and is based on individual need.

Examples of services that may be “non-essential” for in-person delivery include:

- Case Management/Service Coordination/Social Services
- Community Supports
- Companion
- Homemaker
- Respite
- Supported Employment
- Therapies such as for the progression of a therapeutic exercise program. Clinicians are encouraged to maximize the use of telehealth to provide consultation and education, thereby limiting the number of in-home visits therapists are providing.

On a related note, the State recognizes that many providers are experiencing financial difficulty as a result of the Executive Orders. Please know that DAIL is working to identify paths for financial relief for providers in this situation.

For additional questions about the delivery of essential home-based services or program guidance, please contact the designated program staff below for technical assistance.

- Choices for Care: Angela McMann, angela.mcmann@vermont.gov
Cell: (802)793-6986
- Developmental Disabilities Services: Amy Roth, amy.roth@vermont.gov
Cell: (802) 595-9486
- Traumatic Brain Injury Program: Sara Lane, sara.lane@vermont.gov
Cell: (802) 540-5704

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & UPDATES – Please visit the Vermont Health Department’s, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention OR the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living’s website at:

- <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://dail.vermont.gov/novel-coronavirus-information>