

Home Health and Hospice Services Phase 2 COVID-19

June 23, 2020

Use of this Guidance

Home Health and Hospice Agencies provide a broad array of services under the auspices of several Vermont departments and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This guidance provides home health and hospice agencies with comprehensive guidance for all services during Phase 2 and beyond of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

VOSHA Training

Per the VOSHA website, health care workers are not subject to the VOSHA training requirements. Home Health and Hospice Agencies shall comply with all applicable VOSHA requirements.

PPE

All home health and hospice agency services are contingent upon agencies being able to procure an adequate supply of PPE to protect patients and staff. We will continue to source PPE through our own supply chains and in collaboration with state partners.

Skilled Services

Home health and hospice agencies shall continue to provide skilled services (nursing, LNA, MSW, and all therapies) for **adults and children** under physician/NPP orders, coordinating with the physician/NPP if there are questions about the appropriateness of/need for in-person care. Home health and hospice agencies shall provide in-person services under Section D of the Department of Health [Personal Protective Equipment guidance](#).¹ Skilled services for maternal child health including lactation support, feeding and growth assessments and post-partum assessments.

Hospice Services

Home health and hospice agencies will coordinate with the physician/NPP if there are questions about the appropriateness of/need for in-person care. Home health and hospice agencies shall provide in-person services under Section D of the Department of Health [Personal Protective Equipment guidance](#).

Home health and hospice agencies shall continue to adhere to CMS and Department of Health guidance for providing hospice services in skilled nursing facilities.

Maternal Child Health

Maternal Child Health skilled services shall be provided as per the skilled services section above.

In-person services for Strong Families Vermont will resume based on guidance issued to

¹ <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/SOV-Personal-Protective-Equipment-Guidance.pdf>

Home Health and Hospice Services Phase 2 COVID-19

June 23, 2020

participating agencies by the Department of Health.

Congregate Clinical Services

Congregate clinical services provided at the agency (such as foot clinics) shall be provided following the guidance for “outpatient clinic visits” in section 1 of the [Phase One Openings Outpatient Procedures](#) guidance² issued by the Department of Health on May 15, 2020.

Choices for Care

High/Highest Needs: Personal care and other services for the high and highest needs group are essential for program participants fall and the programs were never suspended for the COVID-19 public health emergency. However, many individuals refused services during the height of the emergency. This is a challenging program for which to recruit in the best of times; it is especially challenging given anxiety about COVID-19 and generous federal unemployment benefits. Health and hospice agencies will rebuild the high/highest need programs as eligible individuals request more services, following Section D of the Department of Health [Personal Protective Equipment guidance](#)

Moderate Needs: The Moderate Needs homemaker program was largely suspended during the COVID-19 public health emergency as “non-essential,” although as time passed, more clients met the “[essential services guidance](#)”³ criteria. Like the high/highest needs program, this program is historically challenging to staff, and workforce challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. In cases of workforce shortages, participating agencies will continue to prioritize individuals they serve using the “essential services” criteria. Agencies may limit the number of shopping trips/stores visited to protect staff.

Case Management: Case management services should be provided under the June 22 [in-person services memo](#)⁴ issued by DAIL following Section D of the Department of Health [Personal Protective Equipment guidance](#). Case management services may be provided remotely where appropriate, per the guidance.

² <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/Phase-One-Openings-Outpatient-Procedures.pdf>

³ <https://dail.vermont.gov/sites/dail/files/documents/Final%20Memo%20to%20providers%20hb%20services%203.17.20.pdf>

⁴ [https://dail.vermont.gov/sites/dail/files/documents/Memo In-Person Services.pdf](https://dail.vermont.gov/sites/dail/files/documents/Memo%20In-Person%20Services.pdf)