

RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS FAQs IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

April 8, 2020

DO RATIOS NEED TO BE MAINTAINED FOR YOUTH WHO NEED TO BE QUARANTINED?

DHS is not currently adjusting staff to client ratios, but will work through these specific circumstances on a site-by-site basis. If you are experiencing current specific staffing issues, or will be in the very near future (not hypothetical), please contact Kristin Konchalski via email with the following information: how many staff you believe you will be short and why (illness, childcare, etc) and your proposed plan to meet this need. At this time, DHS supports allowing applicants and other staff that have had all in-state background checks, etc., completed and passed to be hired. DHS will consider waiving the requirement to receive federal fingerprint results back in advance of employment.

DO PROGRAMS NEED TO MAINTAIN AWAKE STAFF FOR LESS THAN 4 CHILDREN?

At this time, DHS is not adjusting staff-to-client ratios or rules, but will work through each specific circumstance on a site-by-site basis.

SHOULD WE PROCEED WITH ROUTINE NON-EMERGENT MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS (I.E. PHYSICAL, DENTAL, EYE)?

Reschedule all non-emergent medical and dental appointments. For emergent appointments, limit exposure in waiting rooms and practice social distancing.

WILL DHS APPROVE AN AGENCY COMBINING OUR TWO FACILITIES TO ONE SITE FOR A FEW WEEKS IF NECESSARY?

This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

IS THERE A CERTAIN PROTOCOL SITES SHOULD FOLLOW REGARDING JUVENILE COURT SERVICES (JCS) AND DHS WORKER VISITS?

JCS and DHS provided field staff guidance, which recommends these visits be conducted via video conferencing.

ARE THERE ANY CHANGES TO THE CISR CONTRACTS, INCLUDING ANY ANTICIPATED ALTERATION TO GUARANTEED PAYMENT FOR BEDS OR IMPACT TO PENDING CONTRACT AMENDMENTS?

No changes to contracts, amendments, contract extensions or guaranteed bed payments are anticipated at this time.

WILL DHS HALT INTAKES AT RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS?

DHS will not halt intakes at this time. See the [Group Settings Guidance in Response to COVID-19](#), which outlines new admissions, protocols for residential settings.

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CAN CHILDREN GO ON VISITS FOR EXTENDED PERIODS AND STAY WITH FAMILIES?

Balancing the needs of children to see their parents in person is currently at odds with the need to practice social distancing to protect the overall health of the public. Effective immediately, DHS is required to re-evaluate each case and determine how to safely implement family meetings and visitation.

DHS strongly encourages the use of video conferencing and telephone conferencing in place of in-person visits. As you work with families to transition to phone and video options, those families with exceptional circumstances, who wish to request an in-person family interaction, must contact their social worker, who will escalate the request to leadership for approval.

If an in-person family interaction or visitation occurs, personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a face mask, must be used. It is the responsibility of the family to supply and use their PPE. DHS will assist with this as we are able. We intend to work with the courts on expediting reunification efforts for children or youth currently engaged in extended home visits.

ARE STAFF ALLOWED TO SELF-CHECK THEIR OWN TEMPERATURE?

Yes, staff may self-check their temperature, but the agency should ensure information the is logged if any staff member has a fever and is sent home.

DOES DHS HAVE MASKS OR KNOW WHERE PROVIDERS CAN GET MASKS?

Most areas throughout the state and country are experiencing a shortage of masks. If a child or staff in your facility has symptoms, contact your local health care provider and let them know the symptoms and share that they live or work in a communal setting. See if the provider is able to assist your agency in getting masks.

IF STAFF ARE WITH A QUARANTINED CHILD, CAN THAT STAFF MEMBER SLEEP AT NIGHT AS LONG AS THE CHILD HAS IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO THE STAFF IF NEEDED? IF SO, DO THEY HAVE TO FORMALLY REQUEST AN EXCEPTION TO A LICENSING RULE?

Yes, this is allowed. DHS does not currently require an official request, but sites will need to contact DHS to discuss. Please make sure to contact DHS as soon as you identify a potential to address planning and support.

CAN CHILDREN BE QUARANTINED IN ROOMS OR FLOORS THAT ARE EMPTY ON CAMPUS, BUT NOT CURRENTLY LICENSED AS GROUP OR SHELTER? (Some sites have empty beds or units.)

Yes, this is allowed as long as rooms meet licensing standards and are staffed accordingly.

