

SOMB Guidance to Approved Providers Regarding COVID-19

March 13, 2020

Dear SOMB Approved Providers:

The Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Domestic Violence and Sex Offender Management (ODVSOM) has been monitoring the COVID-19 virus and assessing the situation along with its anticipated impact. In light of these events, we want to provide you with resources and guidance that can help keep victims, clients, Providers, and other stakeholders as safe as possible.

SOMB Guidance for Approved Providers

Given the response to the spread of the COVID-19, it is more likely than not that there will be disruptions to daily activities for clients going through treatment. These disruptions may create stress, destabilization, and fear. The SOMB aims to limit disruption of services while protecting clients without undue risk to victim and community safety. As such, we are issuing the following guidance:

- **Discretionary Period:** The SOMB is granting a 30-day discretionary period to allow Approved Providers the flexibility to make adjustments for client services that deviate from the Standards and Guidelines. These adjustments may include but are not limited to allowing a client to do individual sessions, allowing for additional absences, or cancelling group sessions to limit transmission of the virus. Approved Providers may make adjustments without distress or fear of being grieved or subject to administrative action so long as the Approved Provider's actions represent their best clinical judgment and ethical prudence.
- **Teletherapy or E-Therapy Variance:** It is important to note, that the discontinuance of services for any period of time may elevate a client's risk for re-offense or for dropping out of treatment. Approved Providers may be the only professionals who are uniquely positioned to continue providing services during this unpredictable time as some treatment is preferable to no treatment. While Approved Providers should strive to continue these services in-person, Approved Providers may submit a variance to the SOMB for an individual or a group of individuals to partake in Teletherapy or E-Therapy during this 30-day discretionary period if it is believed that the in-person requirement will put clients and staff at considerable risk. **Approved Providers utilizing Teletherapy or E-Therapy shall utilize a HIPAA compliant platform and shall ensure that they have the appropriate disclosure form addressing electronic therapy signed by the client.** To submit a waiver, [please fill out this form](#).
- **Follow state and federal guidance on managing patients:** [Read more prevention measures for providers](#) and consult resources, such as the [CDC website](#), the [State](#)



[Emergency Operation Center Daily Updates](#), and the [Governor's Office Updates: Press Releases](#) for more information.

Additional Guidance Regarding Legal Matters

The SOMB is not authorized to speak on any legal matters pertaining to the presiding court or Parole Board for which are affected by COVID-19. Questions involving the requirements or modifications for a court order, a parole agreement, or protection orders should be directed through the appropriate legal channels.

State and Federal COVID-19 Resources

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is leading the state response to COVID-19. The CDPHE website (colorado.gov/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus) has the most up-to-date information on state efforts to contain and treat the virus. You can also find national updates about the novel coronavirus from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov.

CDPHE Hotline

CDPHE has set up a hotline for general COVID-19 questions that is available in many languages:

- **Call** 303.389.1687 or 1.877.462.2911
- **Email** COHELP@RMPDC.org
- **Visit** colorado.gov/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus

CDPHE and the CDC are the best resources for COVID-19 information. Please consult these organizations for all medical questions.

Watch for Additional Updates

This guidance will remain in effect for the next 30 days at which point we will provide clarification to any changes or updates. We commit to updating you with new information and additional procedures. We appreciate your efforts in keeping Coloradans safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky, Program Manager on behalf of the SOMB

Office of Domestic Violence and Sex Offender Management

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