

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS COVID-19

FOR VENDORS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

1. I am a day program provider, should I close my day program?

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 California Department of Public Health (DPH) Guidance prohibits any non-essential gathering of people. More information can be found here:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/cdph-guidance-gatherings-covid19-transmission-prevention-03-16-2020.pdf>

Day program services, to the extent possible, may be provided remotely through video conference such as Skype or Facetime or through teleconference or in an alternate location.

Regional Centers are authorized to pay vendors, including day programs, for absences that are directly related to COVID-19.

2. How do we get personal protective equipment for our homes/facilities (e.g., N95 masks, gowns, gloves)?

Please contact your local public health department and Regional Center to request information on how to obtain personal protective equipment (PPE) and other essential supplies. A list of local public health departments is available here:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/LocalHealthServicesAndOffices.aspx#> and the list of the regional centers is available here: <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/listings/>. The CDC has issued guidance recommending the use of PPE for healthcare personnel caring for patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19 infection. Employers and healthcare personnel are reminded that PPE is only one aspect of safe care of patients with COVID-19. Surgical masks or N-95 respirators are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance. The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain Please refer to the guidance here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

3. Are DDS, Regional Center and Providers considered “essential workforce?”

Workers who provide support to vulnerable populations to ensure their health and well-being, including family care providers, have been deemed as essential critical infrastructure workers. More information can be found here:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>.

4. Can Regional Center’s purchase educational services for children over age three during the school closure caused by a COVID-19 outbreak?

For regional center eligible consumers, an exemption may be granted on an individual basis in extraordinary circumstances to permit the purchase of educational services.

For more information see, WIC 4648.5.

5. Can Infant Development Program services be provided remotely?

Yes, if requested/agreed to by the parent or authorized representative, infant development program services can be provided remotely in lieu of in-person services.

See March 12, 2020 [directive](#).

6. I am feeling sick and think I have COVID-19, what should I do?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, cough or shortness of breath, and you think you might have been exposed to someone who tested positive or you recently traveled to an area that has community transmission, call your health care provider .

As a service provider, it is important to notify your regional center right away if an employee is sent home due to symptoms related to COVID-19.

7. I don’t have a doctor or healthcare provider. What should I do?

If you do not have a doctor or health care provider, you can find more information here:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>.

You can search for a health care provider near you here:

<https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>

8. I'm a regional center service provider, what is the process for me to provide my service in an alternative way?

Due to COVID-19 exposure concerns, a consumer, parent, guardian, or other authorized legal representative of the consumer can request that one or more of their services be provided in an alternate location or through remote electronic communications, including Skype, Facetime, video conference, or telephone conference.

Once the request is made, the service provider must notify the regional center prior to, or no later than seven days after, the delivery of a service in an alternate location or by remote electronic communications, that the individual requested and/or agrees to either receive services in an alternate location or through remote electronic communication in lieu of in-person services.

Next, the regional center will send a follow-up letter to the individual, in their preferred language, confirming that at their request, services will be provided in an alternate location or through remote electronic communication. The letter shall include contact information for the consumer's service coordinator and their supervisor.

The agreement to provide services in an alternate location or through remote electronic communication shall not change the frequency or duration of any IPP service absent the agreement of the consumer's IPP team.

See Department's March 18, 2020 [directive more information](#).

9. I work for a service provider, what guidance is available to protect me if my job requires me to go into individuals' homes?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommend protecting yourself from the COVID-19 illness by taking steps such as:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your elbow and ask others to do the same.
- Maintain social distancing from other people (at least 6 feet),
- Stay away from work, school, or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough.

The CDC, CDPH and local health departments have many specific guidelines about protecting yourself as a healthcare professional when caring for individuals in the home. For this guidance, please refer to:

CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/UseofPersonalProtectiveEquipmentDuringCOVID19Outbreak.aspx>

CDPH:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

Local county health department:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/LocalHealthServicesAndOffices.aspx>

10. Are there grocery stores in my area that have dedicated hours for residential providers or individuals with developmental disabilities?

Many grocery stores are offering special shopping hours exclusively for vulnerable populations and senior citizens. It is recommended you check out your local stores' websites and contact your local regional center for information. More tips on safe shopping can be found on the California Grocers Association website at:

https://enoughforallca.com/wp-content/uploads/CGA-Consumer-Facing-Tip_FINAL.pdf

11. Can early intervention (Early Start program) providers bill for absences for services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy?

As a result of the State of Emergency declared for California, the Department of Developmental Services is currently authorized billing for absences pursuant to Title 17, CCR section 54326(a)(11) in its [March 12, 2020](#) Directive to regional centers for non-residential service providers.

12. I am a Day Program provider that has been affected by the State of Emergency. Will I be paid for absences?

According to [Title 17, 54326\(a\)\(11\)](#), DDS shall authorize payment for absences which are the direct result of situations and/or occurrences for which a State of Emergency has been declared by the Governor. Per the DDS Directives dated [March 12, 2020](#) and [March 18, 2020](#), if payment for absences due to the State of Emergency is authorized by the Department, currently the vendor shall bill only for absences in excess of the average number of absences experienced by the vendor during the 12-month period prior to the month in which the disaster occurred.

13. I have a vendored residential care home with residents temporarily absent due to COVID-19. Will I be paid for these absences?

Yes. Per the DDS Directive [01-041520](#), the requirements of the Lanterman Act, Title 17 regarding payments to a residential facility when a consumer is temporarily absent have been temporarily modified. If the temporary absence from the facility is for the purpose of preventing or minimizing the risk of exposure to COVID-19, the regional center shall continue to pay the established rate as long as no other consumer occupies the vacancy or until it is determined the consumer will not return to the facility. If more than fifty percent of the consumers are temporarily absent for longer than 14 days, within the same month, due to COVID-19 and they are not inpatients in a health facility, the established rate shall be prorated for a partial month of service based on the number of days the consumers resided in the facility.

14. Can providers retroactively bill for remote Supported Employment Program services?

Yes, per the DDS Directive dated [March 18, 2020](#), providers can retroactively bill for remote Supported Employment Program services that were provided on or after the [March 18, 2020](#) Directive.

15. I work for a regional center service provider. Where do I get information about my employee rights and how my employer is paying me?

You should contact your employer about your employee rights and how your employer is paying you.

For more information regarding how California is working to support people financially affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, you may visit <https://covid19.ca.gov/workers/>.

You can also get information from the Department of Fair Employment and Housing at (800) 884-1684 or www.dfeh.ca.gov, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at (800) 669-4000 or www.eeoc.gov and the State of California Department of Industrial Relations at (866) 924-9757 or www.dir.ca.gov.

16. Where can I get up-to-date information about how to support someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

To learn how to support someone who has tested positive, follow the CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>

If you, your staff or the individuals you support are in need of COVID-19 testing visit: <https://covid19.ca.gov/testing-and-treatment/#top>. You can enter your address to find a testing center near you. Currently, health plans are waiving copays for tests and underserved communities can get free testing.

For more California specific information about COVID-19, visit: www.covid19.ca.gov

17. I am providing behavior intervention services remotely. What should I do if the consumer's parent/guardian doesn't submit the service verification form?

As stated in current statute (Welfare and Institutions code Section 4686.31), "If the parents or legally appointed guardians of a minor consumer do not submit a form to the vendor, the vendor shall notify the regional center." The vendor should document efforts to obtain service verification forms signed by the parent/guardian when submitting invoices to the regional center.