



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. BOX 3378
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378**

In reply, please refer to:
File:

Communication to Staff and Providers of the Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration Regarding COVID-19 (updated 3/13/2020)

The Department of Health (DOH) continues to monitor the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) daily. Currently, there are two reported cases of COVID-19 identified in Hawaii, and no deaths. The DOH is the lead agency for COVID-19 response in Hawaii, and is actively working with state, county, and federal partners as well as the medical community in Hawaii in a coordinated response.

There continues to be heightened media attention related to COVID-19 and the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) has received a great many questions from its staff, providers and community partners regarding how they might respond, prepare and stay informed about this pandemic.

The BHA encourages all staff, providers and community partners to utilize resources listed below to get updated information related to COVID-19. These resources provide information about how individuals and programs can stay prepared and take steps to prevent spread of the virus. We encourage everyone to take reasonable precautions and stay informed. **We all play a key role in preparedness. Here's what you can do to plan and prepare now:**

Stay updated:

Visit the below link about COVID-19 from the DOH website. This page is updated on a regular basis. Please also note the additional resources below, including fact sheets in multiple languages.

<https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/>

Additional resources:

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

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

[CDC Resources for Health Care Facilities](#)

Practice everyday protection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Sanitize and sanitize often. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wear a mask if you are sick to prevent spreading illness to other people.

Stay home/go home if you feel sick:

If you are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or have traveled to an area of sustained exposure (China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, Japan, Most European Countries) within in the last 14 days, please stay home and call your doctor.

Call your physician:

If you are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or have traveled to an area of sustained exposure (China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, Japan, Most European Countries) within in the last 14 days, call your doctor to determine if you need to be seen and follow their instructions.

THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE FOR STAFF, PROVIDERS, CONSUMERS AND FAMILIES IS ALSO INCLUDED:

FOR BHA STAFF:

The health and safety of our staff, providers and clients are our utmost priority. Thus, the BHA and its Divisions and programs are closely monitoring the latest developments of COVID-19 and has begun to prepare for all possibilities. **We all play a role in preparedness and to reduce the possibility of the spread of illness, we ask for your help to:**

1. Report to work as usual but practice everyday protections.
 - a. Wash your hands frequently (e.g., after using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing, before preparing food) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - b. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - c. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - d. If you are sick:
 - i. Stay home and contact your doctor- we will continue to explore telework and leave policies to support you.
 - ii. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - iii. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g., door handles, lobby area, countertops, state cars after use) daily.
2. Encourage clients to participate in the same everyday protections. If clients are scheduled to come into a BHA office or Center, call to remind them of the meeting in advance and ask them to reschedule if they are sick, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or have traveled to an area of sustained exposure in the past 2 weeks.
3. Share this memo with all clients and families and familiarize yourself with the information.
4. Set up and join meetings (e.g., treatment team meetings, community meetings, workgroups) by phone or Zoom when possible and appropriate. Encourage other participants to do the same.
5. Authorize and encourage providers to use telehealth for treatment services (provided that the family has the necessary technological resources to participate).
6. Utilize video technology to meet with clients, whenever possible.

SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS:

1. Ensure that your office has an up to date emergency phone tree and ensure that your staff are familiar with the process.
2. Alert staff that the state has developed responses for various labor-related issues associated with COVID-19. Encourage staff to ask questions and respond to the best of your ability.
3. Talk with staff about COVID-19 updates as they arise.
4. Continue to practice and promote basic prevention and protection algorithms described in this memo such as staying home if you feel sick and calling your doctor.
5. Work to maintain a contentious balance between taking necessary precautions and maintaining calm about the situation.

FRONT OFFICE STAFF:

1. Please post a "COVID-19 Door Sign" (such as attached example) to the exterior of your main office door. The sign should politely ask that visitors/clients who are experiencing flu symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath), have been exposed to COVID-19, or who have traveled to a community with sustained exposure within the past 14 days to call the front desk. Assist callers by transferring them to the relevant staff member and help visitors/clients to reschedule as soon as possible.
2. Post relevant information and instructions in the client waiting area. (example attached)
3. Post relevant information and instructions shared staff space (e.g., staff bulletin board).

Continue to share informational resources:

1. Department of Health's issues and advisories for COVID-19:
<https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/>
2. Center for Disease Control's resource on managing mental health and coping during COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>
3. Child Mind Institute's resource on talking to kids about COVID-19:
<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

FOR PROVIDERS:

The health and safety of our staff, providers and clients are our utmost priority. Thus, the BHA and its Divisions and programs are closely monitoring the latest developments of COVID-19 and has begun to prepare for all possibilities. **We all play a role in preparedness and to reduce the possibility of the spread of illness, we ask for your help to:**

1. Practice everyday protections and encourage your staff and clients to do the same:
 - a. Wash your hands frequently (e.g., after using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing, before preparing food) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - b. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - c. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - d. If you are sick:
 - i. Stay home.
 - ii. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - iii. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g., door handles, lobby area, countertops, state cars after use) daily.

2. If clients are scheduled to come in to a BHA office or Center, we will call to remind them of the meeting in advance and ask them to reschedule if they are sick, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or have traveled to an area with sustained exposure in the past 2 weeks.
3. We will share this memo with all clients, and providers.
4. Whenever possible and appropriate, facilitated meetings (e.g., treatment team meetings, community meetings, workgroups) should be conducted by phone or Zoom.
5. As much as possible, we will authorize and encouraging providers to use telehealth for treatment services (provided that consumers have the necessary technological resources to participate).

Continue to share informational resources:

1. Department of Health's issues and advisories for COVID-19: <https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/>
2. Center for Disease Control's resource on managing mental health and coping during COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>
3. Child Mind Institute's resource on talking to kids about COVID-19: <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

FOR CONSUMERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Your health and safety are very important to us. BHA is closely watching the latest updates of COVID-19 and has begun to prepare for all possibilities. **Because each of us plays a role in being ready and to prevent the spread of illness, we want to let you know about some changes that you can expect:**

1. If you are scheduled for an appointment or meeting at any of our offices, we will call to remind you of the meeting and ask you to either reschedule or attend by phone or video conference if you are sick.
2. Meetings and appointments held by phone or video conferencing wherever possible will become more routine in the coming weeks.
3. We will be authorizing and encouraging therapists to use telehealth options for treatment services (if it works for you).
4. We will be posting a sign on our office doors asking visitors/clients who are experiencing flu symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath), who have been exposed to COVID-19, or who have traveled to an area of sustained exposure within the past 14 days to call our front desk. We will assist those callers by transferring them to the relevant BHA staff member to reschedule appointments as soon as possible.
5. We are asking programs to reschedule consumer and/or family visits if family members or clients are sick or to offer phone or video visits instead.

We also wanted to share a few other helpful resources:

1. Department of Health's issues and advisories for COVID-19:
<https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/>
2. Center for Disease Control's resource on managing mental health and coping during COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>
3. Child Mind Institute's resource on talking to kids about COVID-19:
<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

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