

## COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What do I need to know about the COVID-19 to keep my staff and patients safe?**

- a) Follow the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) website for information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Regularly consult the Illinois Department of Public Health website for information specific to our state: <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus>.

### **Q: How do I continue to provide substance use disorder treatment and intervention services and respond to COVID-19?**

- a) Establish a policy to respond to the COVID-19 in your organization. Consult with you medical director to complete the policy.
- b) Implement your emergency response plan.
- c) IDHS/SUPR licensed organizations should consider telehealth as an alternative to face-to-face substance use treatment. Telehealth is the use of digital information and communication technologies, such as computers and mobile devices, to access health care services remotely and manage your health care<sup>1</sup>. Telehealth can be a valuable tool in the delivery of substance use disorder services by reducing barriers to needed care through a cost-effective alternative to traditional face to face services. The Division supports telehealth when needed services would otherwise not be available at this time. Organization are encouraged to read and follow the Contract Policy Manual for more information on telehealth and substance use treatment<sup>2</sup>.

If the organization is not equipped to provide telehealth services or the patient refuses telehealth services, consider providing phone case management to limit individual therapy/counseling and group sessions.

Organizations must develop a crisis response policy for patients who report an opioid relapse or for patients whose mental illness is deteriorating while receiving telehealth or phone case management.

- d) Currently organizations must prioritize the safety of their staff and patient. Therefore, substance use assessments, treatment planning and continuing stay reviews completion timeframes may be extended. Review IDHS/SUPR's Blanket Exception List<sup>3</sup>.

### **Q: What about risk education classes, group counseling and supervision?**

- a) Minimize group gatherings; for example, group counseling and hosting 12-step meetings. Limit staff meeting or participation in upcoming staff trainings.
- b) Group counseling is highly discouraged at this time.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mavoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/telehealth/art-20044878>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27896/documents/By\\_Division/OASA/2020/SUPR\\_Contractual\\_Policy\\_Manual\\_for\\_FY\\_2020.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27896/documents/By_Division/OASA/2020/SUPR_Contractual_Policy_Manual_for_FY_2020.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=122884>

**Q: If staff must be self-quarantined and staffing is reduced can organizations share staff, if needed?**

- a) If you suspect that one of your staff or patients/clients was exposed or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, follow the CDC and IDPH guidelines.
- b) Organizations may share staff to cover the responsibilities of staff who are ill while the COVID-19 Disaster Proclamation is in effect.

**Q: What else can organizations providing substance use disorder treatment and intervention services do?**

- a) Consider changing the hours of operations, stagger or extending hours to limit large groups in waiting rooms.
- b) If there is a need to close your services – intake, treatment or intervention services -- make sure that resources are available for referrals to other SUPR licensed organizations. Contact SUPR if you are temporarily closing the facility. Also, if you are curtailing your hours, changing your services, or shutting down completely, please update that information through the provider portal on the Helpline. It is critical that the Helpline have accurate information during this time.
- c) Restrict visitors under 18 years of age (children and young adults develop mild systems; older populations are at higher risk for serious illness).
- d) For DHS statewide information on COVID-19 visit <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=123118>.