



April 11, 2020

**Documentation Guidance for Designated Providers of Adult Behavioral Health Home and Community Based Services and Recovery Coordination
Regarding Emergency Response to COVID-19**

Introduction

As a result of the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency, service delivery across the system has transformed into a largely telemental health service modality. Although telemental health is a useful tool in these circumstances, it does pose challenges for designated providers of Adult Behavioral Health Home and Community Based Services (BH HCBS) and Recovery Coordination Agencies (RCAs). To address these concerns, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) is issuing documentation guidance intended to reduce the administrative burden on program staff, while ensuring the best possible provision of ongoing care and support.

New York State is in the midst of a rapidly evolving public health emergency, and guidance and recommendations are being updated frequently. OMH is working closely with the Department of Health and Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services to put in place program expectations and reduced billing standards, which will be announced in guidance, as soon as possible. Providers should regularly review [OMH's Guidance Documents page](#) for updates.

Applicability of this Guidance

This guidance applies to designated providers of Community Psychiatric Support & Treatment, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Habilitation, Empowerment Services – Peer Support, Family Support and Training, Education Support Services, Pre-vocational Services, Transitional Employment, Intensive Supported Employment, and Ongoing Supported Employment. It further applies to designated and contracted Recovery Coordination Agencies, which provide the NYS Eligibility Assessment (NYS EA), Plan of Care Development – Initial, and Plan of Care Development – Ongoing. It does not apply to Short-Term Crisis Respite or Intensive Crisis Respite.

Changes in Documentation Requirements during the Disaster Emergency:

For the duration of the declared disaster emergency, or until such time as supplemental guidance is issued:

- The BH HCBS Plan of Care and Individual Service Plans do not need to be updated to reflect the provision of services related to the disaster emergency (e.g. emotional support, relapse prevention strategies, etc.). Services may be provided within the scope of each BH HCBS without a revision or update to the recipient's BH HCBS Plan of Care and/or Individual Service Plan.



- Signatures will not be required at this time, but agreement obtained from the client and others involved shall be documented in the client's record. Such documentation may appear in a progress note, on the signature line of the document, or elsewhere in the chart.
- The member's informed consent for the NYS EA may be given verbally and must be documented in the record.
- BH HCBS and Recovery Coordination providers will document all outreach in the client's record, even if the attempt is unsuccessful.