



# QUARTERLY PROVIDER BULLETIN

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**NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY  
MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY**

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Access to Services & Customer Service:  
877-470-7130  
24 Hour Crisis Help Line:  
877-470-4668 TTY: 711

North Country CMH receives its principal funding from the Michigan Department of Human and Health Services (MDHHS)

Serving Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Kalkaska, and Otsego Counties ...  
Keeping Services Close to Home!

## HIPAA Security Requirements Govern Access To Northstar Electronic Health Records

Specific to protecting the information stored in EHRs, the HIPAA Security Rule requires health care providers to set up physical, administrative, and technical safeguards to protect client’s electronic health information. Some safety measures that NCCMH has built into protecting our client’s records in NorthStar include:

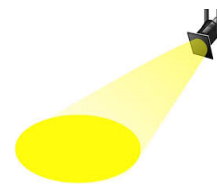
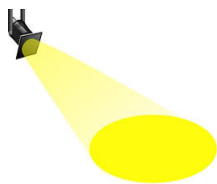
- “Access controls” like passwords and multi-factor authentication, to help limit access to client information
- “Encrypting” stored information
- An “audit trail,” which records were accessed, what changes were made and when
- Contractual requirement for providers to update NorthStar User Registrations immediately when a change occurs

If client data is seen by someone who should not see it, federal law requires the provider and NCCMH to notify the client of a “breach” of their health information. This requirement helps clients know if their information has been compromised. It also keeps providers accountable. We all understand this not just to be a contractual requirement, but also to be a rights issue to maintain the privacy of client information. With staffing changes being prevalent, all providers are requested to have administrative procedures in place that assure user registrations to NorthStar are updated on a regular basis and that notification to NCCMH occurs immediately upon a provider staff termination.

Providers were requested to update their NorthStar User Registration Listing by February 15, 2021. However, many updates remain to be submitted. All providers who have not submitted a NorthStar User Registration within the last 90 days are requested to verify their NorthStar users by completing the NorthStar User Registration Listing and turn it in immediately. The form is now listed on our website at [NorthStar Verification Form](#). To maintain provider compliance, please submit an updated NorthStar Electronic Health Record to the Contract Manager at [llaporte@norcccmh.org](mailto:llaporte@norcccmh.org).

# Spotlight on Critical Contract Clauses

By Lani Laporte, Contract Manager (llaporte@norcocmh.org)



The new master contract templates contain wording which requires Provider reporting and compliance of specific regulations. Two critical requirements are indicated below as a means of bringing the fine print of your contracts to your attention. ***Contract clauses are italicized and in bold.***

## Master Contract Section XII:

### STAFFING AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.

#### Reporting which affects reimbursement levels:

***"The Provider shall notify the Payor's CEO or the CEO's designated representative immediately whenever: (1.) the Provider's staffing and staff/recipient ratio become contrary to those used for projections in the Payor's determination of the reimbursement methodology/rate(s) for supports/services, as set forth in "Exhibit C"; (2.) the Provider's staffing of supports/services required under this Agreement has not been or cannot be provided; or, (3.) the need for supports/services to the Consumer is otherwise less than or greater than the Provider's staffing levels agreed upon hereunder by the parties."***

For the purposes of this discussion, "immediate" notification means the next available business day. Notifications of inability to maintain staffing in the short or long term for the supports/services in the IPOS should be sent to the Supports Coordinator. Michael Wolf, provider network manager, should be notified if the provider's staffing ratios change, or are anticipated to change, for the majority of any billing period, i.e. monthly, and again that change needs to be reported immediately as it may affect reimbursement rates.

#### Responsibility of the Provider to assure subcontractors are trained:

***"The Provider, pursuant to this Agreement, shall ensure that orientation of and ongoing training of the Provider's staff and the staff of the Provider's subcontractors include offerings on crisis management, behavior management, and recipient rights, including person-centered planning. The Provider assures the Payor that, pursuant to this Agreement, all individuals employed by the Provider or the Provider's subcontractors shall receive training related to recipient rights protection before or within thirty (30) days after the commencement of such employment. Such recipient rights training shall occur in concert or through technical consultation with the Payor's Recipient Rights Office."***

NCCMH contracts indicate that subcontractors should not be utilized without approval of the agency. In addition, when subcontractors are approved, the provider remains responsible to assure staff training meets agency and Medicaid requirements. Providers who hire direct care or other staff on a 1099 subcontracted basis, are not only responsible for the subcontractors training, but they are also responsible to fulfill all State Requirements for workman's compensation insurance, and as contractually required.

*Northern Regional Conference on  
Developmental Disabilities*

*Providing Education for people who make a difference!*



## **BURN BRIGHT, BUT NOT OUT!!**

**April 14th, 2021**

**9:00am-2:30pm**

**We want to thank you for your service!! Join us for this virtual event for free! Sessions included:**

**Here Comes the Sun: Recovering from Stress and Burnout After a Historic Year**

**Adapted Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Special Populations**

**Supported Decision-Making and the Importance of Alternatives to Guardianship**

**RSVP by emailing for a Zoom link:**

**DDConf2020@gmail.com**

**Questions? Call 231-587-9176**

**Participants are encouraged to watch the movie “Crip Camp” prior to the conference, a movie about the Civil Rights movement of people with disabilities. A link to the movie is available at our website:**

**<https://nrcodd.org>**

## COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Expanded in Michigan

MDHHS announced that beginning Monday, March 8, individuals 50 years or older with medical conditions or disabilities, or caregiver family members and guardians who care for kids with special health care needs will be eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, beginning on April 5, anyone 16 and older will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

MDHHS stated that it is accelerating vaccination of these individuals due to concern around disparity in life expectancy and to remove barriers to vaccine access. Additionally, with the approval of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, Michigan is slated to receive an increase in COVID-19 vaccines from the federal government.

[Click to view MDHHS' COVID-19 Vaccination Interim Prioritization Guidance.](#)

**NEXT**

## Quarterly Provider Meeting

**is scheduled for Tuesday, May 4, 2021**

CURRENTLY ALL MEETINGS ARE VIRTUAL



**Mark your calendar for  
ALL  
Quarterly Provider  
Meetings this year:**

- ✓ **August 3, 2021**
- ✓ **November 2, 2021**

If you desire to hear about a specific topic at our quarterly provider meetings, please email our Contract Manager, Lani Laporte, at [llaporte@norcocmh.org](mailto:llaporte@norcocmh.org) or call 231-439-1297. Topics not relevant to all providers may be scheduled at a special in-person or skype meeting time outside of regular quarterly meeting.

# PROVIDER QUARTERLY UPDATE - OFFICE OF RECIPIENT RIGHTS, HEALTH & SAFETY

## Tornado Safety: Time to Review

By Linda Kleiber ([lkleiber@norcocmh.org](mailto:lkleiber@norcocmh.org))

Spring is traditionally regarded as tornado season, but they can occur in any month of the year given the right situation and location. March is a good time to review your worksite's tornado procedure. This should include when you are in your building, out in the community, or in a vehicle. Tornadoes are violent. They can completely destroy well-made structures, uproot trees and hurl objects through the air like deadly missiles. Although severe tornadoes are most common in the Plains States, they can happen anywhere.

Identify a safe place in the home where household members and pets will gather during a tornado: a basement or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.



**A tornado WATCH** means a tornado is possible.



**A tornado WARNING** means a tornado is already occurring or will occur soon. **GO TO YOUR SAFE PLACE IMMEDIATELY.**

Be sure to have emergency supplies on hand. Check your worksite's emergency bag for:

- First aid kit
- Battery operated radio
- Flashlight
- Emergency blankets
- Cell phone & emergency phone numbers
- Extra batteries
- Food supply/bottled water (monitor expiration dates). Food should meet the needs of the individual's served.
- Non-electric can opener, if needed.

For more information on Tornado preparedness [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

# What Happens After an Allegation of a Recipient Rights Violation is Reported to the Office of Recipient Rights (ORR)?

By Brandy Marvin, Recipient Rights Specialist ([bmarvin@norcocmh.org](mailto:bmarvin@norcocmh.org))

First, the investigator must determine if the reported incident is a violation of a protected right under the Michigan Mental Health Code (MMHC).

*If the allegation is determined not to be a code protected right or if the ORR lacks jurisdiction; the complainant (unless reported anonymously) will be informed in writing within 5 days.*

*If the complaint allegation is deemed a valid violation of a recipients' rights under the MMHC; an acknowledgment letter is mailed to the named complainant within 5 days of receiving the complaint.*

**INTERVENTION:** *If the facts and remedy of the case are clear, and "disciplinary action" is not required, the investigator may choose to intervene within 30-days in lieu of conducting a more formal investigation.* If the allegation is substantiated, remedial action must be submitted to the ORR by the respondent within 10 days of receipt. The named complainant will receive a copy of the outcome.

**INVESTIGATION:** *If the allegation involves Abuse or Neglect, serious injury, or death; the ORR is responsible for initiating an immediate investigation.* The office must initiate investigations of all apparent rights violations in a timely manner. Investigations must be completed within 90 days; however, some may be subject to delay if it involves pending action from an external agency-such as law enforcement.

During the course of the investigation, telephone and/or in-person interviews are conducted, written statements are obtained, records and documents are reviewed, and any other applicable evidence is collected. Every 30 calendar days, a written status report is submitted to the named complainant, the respondent, and NCCMH's Chief Executive Officer. The investigator determines whether or not a right was violated by using the 'Preponderance of the Evidence' as its standard of proof.

*[Preponderance of the Evidence= the party bearing the burden of proof must present evidence that is 'more credible and convincing than not'—this is also the standard of proof used in most civil cases.]*

A **REPORT OF INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS**, which includes a statement of the allegations and issues, relevant citations, investigative findings, conclusion and any recommendations, is submitted to the respondent and CEO. The respondent is then required to submit appropriate **CORRECTIVE ACTION** (remedial and/or disciplinary) taken with the accused staff within 10 business days.

A **SUMMARY REPORT**, including a summarized version of the Report of Investigative Findings and verification of corrective action, is provided to the named complainant, recipient and/or guardian.

*A rights investigation may be reopened or reinvestigated by the office if there is new evidence that was not presented at the time of the investigation. An accurate record is maintained for all complaints filed with the Office of Recipient Rights.*

# Physical Activity Is Vital for Well-Being During the Covid-19 Pandemic

By Amanda Herscher (aherscher@norcocmh.org)

Being physically active is one of the most important actions that people of all ages can take to improve their health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, only 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 5 adolescents in the United States meet physical activity guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this. The nation-wide lockdown, social distancing measures, remote learning, and restriction to many facilities have made it difficult for people to get the physical activity they need. People are staying home more which is causing them to be sedentary for much of the day.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has caused getting adequate physical activity a challenge, it is now more important than ever. It can reduce stress, prevent weight gain, boost the immune system, and improve sleep. The physical and mental benefits of exercising begin immediately, and even short bursts of exercise are beneficial. Although staying physically active can take some creativity and extra effort during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital to optimize your health and wellbeing.

### How to stay active during the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Take breaks from sitting at the computer
- Alternate between sitting and standing
- Take activity breaks such as cleaning, dancing, or gardening
- Get outdoors and walk
- Take a virtual class or use online exercise videos
- Get active with the whole family



## SIGNATURE SHEET REQUIREMENT

Residential or Service Sites subject to site reviews are requested to please create a signature sheet (example below) to record that staff have read and will comply with the material presented in the Quarterly Recipient Rights, Health and Safety pages of this bulletin, which replaces the previously issued Quarterly Brochure. This bulletin also replaces annual updates of Environmental Emergencies, Recipient Rights, and Medications. Sign off sheets will be monitored during annual site visits. We suggest printing & posting the Quarterly Recipient Rights and Safety pages of this bulletin on site, as well as reviewing them during staff meetings.

MARCH 2021

NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Mary Smith	<i>Mary Smith</i>	3/20/21
Ben Hur	<i>Ben Hur</i>	3/20/21

*Environmental Emergencies*

*Recipient Rights*

*Medication Updates*

