

NCCMH RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Issue #4 03.27.2020



PROVIDER COMMUNICATION

NORTH COUNTRY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
1420 PLAZA ROAD, PETOSKEY, MI 49770

PROVIDER UPDATES ON RECIPIENT RIGHTS DURING COVID-19 SECLUSION PERIOD

ATTN: CONTRACT PROVIDERS

Please note these procedural updates/changes concerning recipient rights. We ask that you please inform your staff.

- a. Plans of Service (POS) still need to be followed to the best of staff's ability with a person-centered approach. **The ORR will not substantiate against staff for failing to provide a service which is limited by the "Stay Safe, Stay Home" mandate or other executive order.**
- b. The ORR will continue to investigate any failure to provide necessary services, (i.e.) personal care as outlined in a POS, care plan or other written directive. We will investigate all complaints of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. Exploitation means staff taking anything belonging to a client(s) for their own personal use. This includes, but is not limited to taking money, food and cleaning or hygiene supplies.
- c. All staff are still obligated to report suspected or known rights violations to the ORR and other agencies as required by law. We are also available for consults during working hours. The ORR can be reached via email at Recipient-Rights@norccmh.org, through video conferencing platforms (skype) or by phone:
 - Brandy Marvin: 231-439-1227
 - Kim Rappleyea: 231-439-1268
- d. During this crisis, communicating with health care providers, including CMH staff via non-public video conferencing platforms is NOT considered a HIPAA violation. However, care must be taken to provide a confidential environment when any telephonic or video communication is used.
- e. Executive order 2020-7, which requires visitor restrictions and symptom screening must be followed. Failure to do so may be investigated as neglect.
- f. Any instance when written consent is required but cannot be obtained, can now be acquired verbally instead. This must be documented on the form in question.
- g. [*Subject to further updates from MDHHS*] Unless a client is symptomatic or medically vulnerable, they are still permitted to access essential services per their POS and the "Stay Safe, Stay Home" order. For example, if a client needs to go to the store, or wishes to take a walk, unless limited by the POS/BTP or executive order, they are still allowed to do so. The client would need to follow CDC guidelines for social distancing and other recommended protective measures. Staff should use their best judgment when determining the vulnerability of the client and other residents in the home. Explain the risks to the client who wishes to leave the home and provide alternative solutions when possible. **It is permissible and encouraged to err on the side of safety in these circumstances**, but please consult with the client's treatment team/staff to problem solve.

Above all, THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK. You are saving the lives of our most vulnerable population and CMH staff are here to support you in any way we can. We are so grateful for your service. Stay safe!

**Kim Rappleyea,
Director of Recipient Rights
North Country Community Mental Health Authority**