



## **MLP COVID-19 Update**

March 27, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

In today's update, we present several new and important items and resources for your practice, to share with your patients and families, and your colleagues in the field. As things are moving so rapidly in so many areas, information overload can be daunting – but please don't hesitate to reach out to any one of our team should you have any questions, comments, ideas or feedback.

Today we focus on the following areas:

- **Early Childhood Remote Services – Birth to 3 Providers**

The Dept. of Social Services (DSS) and the Office of Early Childhood issued guidance on Tuesday regarding remote early intervention services for the **Birth to 3 program** (also known as Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The first bulletin, which may be found [here](#), adds permanent coverage for remote early intervention (EI) under specified circumstances and focuses on children who live far from *hearing specialty providers* and also provide services more readily to those children with compromised immune systems.

The second bulletin may be found [here](#). Per DSS's instructions, Remote EI is broadened to all categories of early intervention services, removes the requirement for provider to obtain prior authorization to provide remote early intervention, removes requirement for Remote EI to be listed in the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) as a condition to provide Remote EI, and enables Remote EI to be provided by audio-only telephone in specified limited circumstances.

- **Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)**

The current COVID-19 crisis does not extinguish a HUSKY/Medicaid recipients right to medical transportation. While many health care appointments have shifted to a telemedicine format, it is appropriate for some patients to see their provider in person. Patients should still be contacting the state's NEMT contractor, (Veyo, 855-478-7350), if they require transportation to a medical appointment. *Veyo should be providing all*

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existing services throughout the state and should not be unilaterally canceling appointments because are not “an emergency.” If patients are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, Veyo should be still be facilitating transportation. This includes ongoing behavioral health appointments as well.

If your patients are experiencing problems with VEYO transportation, please email or call MLP Attorney Bonnie Roswig at [broswig@cca-ct.org](mailto:broswig@cca-ct.org) or (860) 566-0836. To learn more about your patients’ rights under the Veyo contract, please see our MLP fact sheet on NEMT services [here](#).

- **Educational Access**

- *Distance Learning*

Governor Lamont’s recent [Executive Order No. 7L](#), extends all school closures to April 20, 2020, a date that will most likely be extended into May and perhaps beyond. Over the past few weeks districts have been preparing distance learning opportunities for their students. Here are some of the larger school district’s distance learning pages:

For the Bridgeport Public Schools please go [here](#).

For East Hartford Public Schools, please go [here](#).

For Hartford Public Schools, please go [here](#).

For New Britain Public Schools, please go [here](#).

For New London Public Schools, please go [here](#).

For New Haven Public Schools, please go [here](#).

For Waterbury Public Schools, please go [here](#).

For a comprehensive statewide list of school districts’ distance learning web pages, please go to the Connecticut Association of Non-Profits (CONCAN) [here](#). The State Department of Education (SDE) has produced a [webpage with resources for distance learning](#) for both parents and educators.

- *Students with Disabilities*

On March 24, SDE issued including an important [working document regarding special education opportunities](#) for students with disabilities. In general, the memorandum encourages schools districts to provide continued educational opportunities to students with disabilities even with the transition to distance or remote learning. However – school districts *are not required to conduct planning and placement team (PPT)*

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*meetings as SDE has deemed the transition to on-line learning not to constitute a change of educational placement.*

We have concerns about how school closures will impact education for all children, particularly in resource strapped districts and for students with disabilities. We encourage you to reach out to us with questions, concerns, and stories about how distance learning is being implemented in your community and for your patients, *especially those children and youth with disabilities with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans*. We will continue to update you on how the educational advocacy community is addressing this extremely challenging and difficult issue.

- *Additional School Closure Resources*

The final word on school closure resources belongs to the outstanding [School Closure Kit](#) from our colleagues at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. There you will find strategies to share with your patients and families on how to deal with this incredibly challenging time while schools remain closed.

- **Food Pantries**

Two excellent web-based statewide food pantry locators are the [United Way's Food Pantry Locator](#), and [FoodPantries.Org](#) websites.

For mobile foodbanks in *southern and southwestern Connecticut*, the Connecticut Foodbank's mobile foodbank schedule can be found [here](#). For mobile foodbanks in *north-central Connecticut*, Foodshare's mobile foodbank schedule can be found [here](#). For southeastern Connecticut, the United Way's website has a comprehensive listing of mobile foodbanks [here](#).

- **Cash Assistance – Temporary Family Assistance Limits Suspended**

Finally – in the governor's March 26 [Order](#), the state is temporarily suspending the 21 month time limit on the receipt of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), or cash assistance, during the pendency of the coronavirus crisis. Families interested in applying for ongoing TFA should apply on-line at the Department of Social Services [ConneCT webpage](#).

Thank you again for all your dedicated work and if you have any questions about the legal landscape for your patients and families at this time, please don't hesitate to reach out to anyone on our team.



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