

March 24, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 20-26

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide options for conducting In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) reassessments. Additionally, this ACL provides guidance on how to prioritize workload during the COVID-19 crisis.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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GOVERNOR

March 24, 2020

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 20-26

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY FISCAL OFFICERS
ALL IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) PROGRAM
MANAGERS
PUBLIC AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES REASSESSMENT OPTIONS
AND WORKLOAD PRIORITIES DUE TO COVID-19

REFERENCE: [WELFARE & INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 12301.1\(b\)](#)
[MPP SECTION 30-761.13](#)
[PROGRAM MANAGER LETTER DATED MARCH 12, 2020](#)
[GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER DATED MARCH 17, 2020](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide options for conducting In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) reassessments. Additionally, this ACL provides guidance on how to prioritize workload during the COVID-19 crisis.

REASSESSMENT FLEXIBILITY

As stated in the [PROGRAM MANAGER LETTER DATED MARCH 12, 2020](#), under normal circumstances counties are required to conduct face-to-face needs assessments and reassessments, as required by [WELFARE & INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 12301.1\(b\)](#) and [MPP SECTION 30-761.13](#). However, given the release of the [GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER DATED MARCH 17, 2020](#), counties may suspend any scheduled reassessments through June 30, 2020. At this time, any initial face-to-face assessments to establish eligibility for IHSS must still be performed. However, the social worker should minimize the amount of assessment time spent in the recipient's home by collecting all relevant information possible over the phone before the home visit. Additionally, prior to going to the recipient's home, the social worker should ask the recipient if the recipient is asymptomatic and whether they know they have been exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Likewise, a social worker with any symptoms of illness and/or known exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 shall not do an in-home assessment under any circumstances.

During this time, counties may continue performing reassessments by conducting them via telephone. However, any adverse actions related to any reassessments conducted during this time (i.e. reduced hours or termination of services) shall not take effect until June 30, 2020.

PREVENTION AND PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

With respect to initial assessments, all precautions recommended by public health agencies to prevent transmission of COVID-19 should be adhered to while in the home, including but not limited to, maintaining a 6-foot distance between the social worker and all individuals present in the home. The California Department of Public Health has issued guidance ([CDPH Guidance Page](#)) regarding the most effective methods of preventing the spread of COVID-19, including basic precautions like washing hands for 20 seconds and refraining from touching your face. CDPH has also released guidance indicating that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should only be used by healthy individuals in specific circumstances (i.e., when staff are in prolonged close contact with someone with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection) ([PPE Guidance](#)). Should your county need additional supplies of PPE for recommended uses, the process for requesting those is to contact your local Office of Emergency Services.

WORKLOAD PRIORITIES

Counties primary work focus during this time should be on activities related to applicants and recipients receiving timely authorization and provision of services. Therefore, initial assessments, requests for reassessments due to change in recipient condition or circumstances, including the loss of alternative resources due to COVID-19 impacts, enrollment of providers and ensuring that phone calls received from both providers and recipients are answered and/or are returned as quickly as possible are priorities.

EFFECTIVE DATES OF REASSESSMENT FLEXIBILITY

The requirements and flexibilities in this ACL shall expire automatically and without further notice from the Department within 90 days of issuance of this ACL or earlier upon written notice from the Department.

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Questions or requests for clarification regarding the information in this letter should be directed to the Adult Programs Division, Policy and Quality Assurance Branch, Policy and Operations Bureau at (916) 651-5350.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

DEBBI THOMSON
Deputy Director
Adult Programs Division