

Date: September 23, 2020

To: Iowa MIECHV and HOPES-HFI Contractors

From: Janet Horras, State Home Visitation Program Director

Effective: Upon receipt and until further notice is provided

Re: Teleconferencing Policy during COVID 19

Until further notice, the Iowa Department of Public Health requires that MIECHV and HOPES-HFI programs conduct all home visitation/parent education services virtually. The federal funder of MIECHV, the Health Resources and Services Administration in conjunction with all of the evidence-based models in use in Iowa has provided continued guidance on the **exclusive** use of teleconferencing to deliver home visiting services to maintain the health and safety of the workforce and the families we serve. **The exclusive use of teleconferencing (video conferencing, talk, text and mail) means no face to face services shall be provided.** Face to face services include, but are not limited to, porch visits, outdoor visits, office visits and home visits. Home visiting programs that offer a group-based parent education component shall also exclusively use teleconferencing for the delivery of services.

IDPH recommends that MIECHV and HOPES-HFI contractors allow telecommuting for their staff when conducting non-home visiting/parent education activities, but should follow their agency policies and procedures. Home visitors may practice contactless drop off of supplies to enrolled families if allowed by their agency policies and procedures. IDPH recommends cloth face coverings, social distancing and following hand washing practices whenever staff are interacting with colleagues or when dropping off supplies. If staff are not allowed by agency policies and procedures to telecommute, IDPH recommends that the agency implement a daily health screening including a temperature check.

### Exception to Policy

**Exceptions to policy are expected to be rare and a matter of life or death.** Exceptions to the policy may be granted by a two-level approval process. It is recommended that the two levels of approval for the exception to policy be a supervisor and the organization's executive director or their designee. Approval must be in writing and be kept on file with the family records. A copy of the approved exception must be sent to your assigned contract manager at IDPH within 24 hours of being granted. IDPH is not approving exceptions to policy. Forwarding the approval of the exception is simply for communication purposes. All standard health protocols must be followed including the wearing of cloth face coverings, handwashing before and after the contact, held outdoors if possible, social distance if possible and keep the contact brief.

### Technical Assistance

The Rapid Response team has a library of resources available to assist home visitors in transitioning to teleconferencing (<https://rrvhv.earlyimpactva.org/>). The Phones for Families program was established to assist families in being able to communicate with their home visitor and with other providers. The Snack and Share series was established to provide additional supports to all home visitors during the Pandemic. The IDPH home visiting unit is available to provide technical assistance. Please email your contract manager or Janet Horras to arrange for technical assistance.