

Date: March 17, 2020

To: Iowa MIECHV and HOPES-HFI Contractors

From: Janet Horras, State Home Visitation Program Director

Temporary Protocol: Use of Teleconferencing during Public Health Emergencies (or during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency)

Cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Iowa. In the event that a family enrolled in a home visiting program has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or is in a self-quarantined situation at home, we recommend the use of teleconferencing to deliver home visiting services to maintain service levels to affected families. The use of teleconferencing in this state of emergency will decrease the likelihood of spreading the disease. Home visitors that identify as being at high risk for complications with COVID-19 or would prefer to move to teleconferencing in lieu of in home visits should follow their organization's policies and procedures. It is acceptable to offer home visits through teleconferencing methods, if that is acceptable to the employing organization.

Group-based parent events that the home visiting program may be offering should be cancelled if they are larger than groups of ten persons. We always encourage you to follow your school districts guidance if school is canceled then group meetings should also be cancelled.

Teleconferencing methods include Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, Facebook Messenger video calling, and Google Hangouts amongst many others. The specific teleconferencing method should be determined by local family support organizations based on availability and local needs.

Please inform your IDPH contract manager if you are substituting teleconferencing for home visits. Our federal funder has approved virtual home visits in lieu of face to face visits to meet our federally required benchmarks. We want to keep home visitors and the families we serve as safe as possible from the spread of the coronavirus.

As mentioned in our information memo, dated 3/10/20, home visitors that are ill should always refrain from providing home visiting services during their illness. Home visitors should always take care to wash their hands before and after each home visit. Every organization is required to have a vacancy plan in place. You may need to be actively referring to your vacancy policy during this time.

We also want to encourage you to refer again to the IDPH website for up to date information on the Coronavirus:

IDPH Novel Coronavirus Website: <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>

Please reach out to us if you have a specific situation that you would like to discuss. Remember you must let us know if you are substituting teleconferencing for face to face home visits. Thank you again, for all you do on behalf of the families we serve.

This temporary protocol is in effect until May 31, 2020.