**Detroit Wayne
Integrated Health Network**

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March 31, 2020

To: DWIHN-ASD Providers
From: Willie E. Brooks, Jr. President/CEO
Cc: Ebony Reynolds-Clinical Officer, Crystal Palmer-Children's Initiatives Director, Ebony Lawson-Program Administrator-Autism Spectrum Disorder
RE: COVID-19 Coronavirus Autism Provider Update

The Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network (DWIHN) continues to monitor and assess the health crisis spurred by the COVID-19 virus. As a result, we want to ensure that the health and safety of our workforce and the families we serve remain a top priority. On March 25, 2020 the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) released "Guidance for Specific Clinically Essential Face to Face Encounters in Behavioral Health Clinics, Substance Use Services and Residential Settings in the COVID-19 Context." This document provides clarification on face-to-face contact for behavioral health providers. In accordance with this mandate, DWIHN is asking its network of Autism Providers to follow the most recent guidelines issued by MDHHS, with particular attention to the following:

o   Each service should be evaluated on an individual basis and the clinical rationale for telephonic or virtual method must be documented in the treatment record.
o   The clinical rationale for the use of virtual methods versus home-based or clinic-based intervention given the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Safe Order should be based upon the behavioral health needs of the individual and whether or not a home-based or clinic-based intervention is essential to maintain the individual's health and safety at home and in the least restrictive environment.
o   The clinical rationale for the use of telephonic or virtual services must be reviewed and updated regularly as the individual's needs and the public health crisis evolves.
o   Clinical decisions should be based on the behavioral health needs of the person served. In addition to their behavioral health needs, the risk posed to the person served for contracting and spreading the COVID-19 virus must be considered when evaluating the need for face-to-face clinical assessment and documented in the treatment record.

Additionally, providers should have written protocol for staff who are entering family homes, provide medically approved personal protection equipment (PPE) for each staff person conducting home visits and institute health and safety practices such as daily health checks to ensure staff remain healthy. Finally, providers should be diligently practicing and educating families on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on prevention of the COVID-19 virus, as well as ensuring that families know their options with regard to transferring providers or opting out of services if they so choose. Families should also be made aware that their services will not be terminated for choosing to opt out of service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We request you submit the following to DWIHN if your agency plans to continue providing face-to-face services:

- o Provide DWIHN with the diagnostic criteria your agency is using to determine that ABA is critical for the family and cannot be maintained via approved telemedicine encounter codes during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- o Provide DWIHN with your agencies plan to provide technicians with medically approved PPE for the health and safety of themselves and the people we serve.
- o Indicate how you will document that you have properly educated the family on the risks of spreading COVID-19 based on the current CDC guidelines if technicians enter their home.
- o Please provide DWIHN with your agencies plan to support family's choice to discontinue with the ABA intervention during COVID-19 Stay Home, Stay Safe executive order issued by Governor Whitmer.

Thank you for your diligence throughout this process.

Resource:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html