



March 27, 2020

Dear Prevention Providers:

As you can imagine, work at OASAS continues to evolve during the COVID-19 emergency. The feedback we have received from you has been extremely helpful and has allowed us to further consider modifications to the delivery of prevention services to accommodate this public health emergency. The goal is to provide enough flexibility during this time to allow for innovative approaches for the work to continue with youth, families and communities.

First, I would like to clarify that attestations for OASAS certified prevention counseling programs to deliver services using telepractice should be sent to certification@oasas.ny.gov. Attestations for funded providers to provide services such as Teen Intervene or BASICS should be sent to prevention@oasas.ny.gov (see attached attestation). All prevention providers shall abide by the telepractice guidelines issued for the COVID-19 emergency (see Frequently Asked Questions attached), shall submit an attestation, and shall provide services via telepractice or other electronic communications.

The Division of Prevention and Problem Gambling Services has issued updated guidance related to reporting telepractice and services provided electronic communication. Furthermore, the Division has determined that the following requirements, as stated in the **2014 Prevention Guidelines**, will be adjusted/waived during the COVID-19 emergency:

Workplans

- The due date for 2020-2021 Workplans has been extended to May 15, 2020.

Expansion of Age Parameters

- Prevention services (prevention education, environmental strategies, information awareness, community capacity building, positive alternatives, EBP early intervention) shall extend over the lifespan. This will further expand your ability provide prevention services that are innovative in reaching families and communities.

Evidence Based Practices:

- For the remainder of the year, March 1st - June 30th 2020, the EBP percentage requirement will be waived. Providers would be responsible for EBP percentage from July 2019 – February 29th 2020. The EBP calculations would be made for this time frame.

- Where the developer has issued guidance for virtual delivery, the provider should follow those recommendations. If this is not possible, email prevention@oasas.ny.gov.
- Where the developer has not issued guidance for virtual delivery, providers who deliver the service virtually will get credit toward the performance standard;

Prevention Counseling:

- All OASAS certified prevention counseling providers shall communicate with the school district they work with and those in their catchment area about making this service available to students while school is closed. Students and parents should be advised that prevention counseling services will continue through telepractice platforms.
- Prevention Counseling Services shall include individuals between the ages of 5-22:
- Face to face services are waived;
- Consent for services and review of participant services plans and any other prevention counseling services that require a written signature should be attempted in writing and when not possible, verbal consent may be granted and documented appropriately;
- Prevention Counseling Services may continue beyond the 30-day face to face requirement;
- Performance Standard 7: “% of Successful Completion:” participants discharged due to the COVID-19 crisis will NOT be included in this standard.

Furthermore, the Division has identified suggestions for providing prevention counseling via telepractice:

- Providers should determine if they are able to utilize the technology the school is using to virtually reach out to and communicate with students. Phone calls or email communication is also acceptable;
- Students can reach out to prevention counselors via the counselor’s office phone or school email address. Student email is a good way to communicate with students regarding setting up times that would work so that conversations can occur during safe times when there can be confidentiality;
- If the provider is calling from a personal phone, they can use the *67 function to ensure that their number remains private;
- All documentation required for face to face counseling applies during telepractice.

We are truly grateful for your commitment to providing prevention services during this very difficult time. Please feel free to contact us at prevention@oasas.ny.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

Patricia Zuber-Wilson
Associate Commissioner
Division of Prevention and Problem Gambling Services

