



April 7, 2021

Reopening Guidance for Prevention Services Programs:

OASAS funded and certified prevention agencies offering prevention services may allow, but not require, staff to resume operating in their office spaces, but must adhere to all [business guidance for reopening](#), including developing specific policies and protocols including [guidance specific to office spaces](#). These policies and protocols, to ensure infection control precautions in office spaces, should include, but not be limited to, staff screening (e.g., COVID-19 risk and symptom questions, temperatures, international travel questions), visitor restrictions, social distancing among staff, staggered work schedules, continued remote working when able, use of mandatory surgical masks and optional eye protection (face shield and/or goggles) for staff and mandatory face coverings for clients and visitors, and disinfecting procedures. Programs must adhere also to any and all procedures of facility hosts where they are tenants and are responsible for ensuring infection control precautions within the space they occupy. All services to the public may continue to be offered remotely rather than in-person.

For funded and certified prevention programs conducting one-on-one prevention services (i.e., prevention counseling, Teen Intervene and Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students [BASICS]):

- Telepractice should continue to be the preferred method to deliver individualized services, whenever possible. If face-to-face services are provided, the programs must follow all infection control guidance, including the 3/11/20 [Guidance for NYS Behavioral Health Programs](#).
- Programs must have a plan to maintain adequate social distancing amongst/between any staff and clients while on site. Furthermore, the plan must stipulate that all staff must wear mandatory surgical masks and optional eye protection (face shield and/or goggles) and all clients must wear mandatory face coverings, per [Executive Order 202.16](#) and [NYS DOH guidance](#) when on site unless otherwise documented by the individual’s medical provider as having a medical reason that they cannot do so.
- In-person individual sessions may occur with staff wearing mandatory surgical masks and optional eye protection (face shield and/or goggles) and clients wearing mandatory face coverings and while maintaining social distancing, but providers should still consider the risks vs benefits of in-person visits (including risk to clients during transport to/from the program) for each client in the context of continued COVID-19 infection risk.
 - Any program that has a confirmed COVID-19 case among staff or clients on-site *that results in contact tracing activity among anyone who was on-site* must revert to working entirely through telepractice with most staff out of the office for at least 14 days.
 - Please note that local health departments and the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) have the ability to place further restrictions on the activities at programs as the result of contact tracing or outbreak investigation activities. If this occurs, programs should immediately notify the OASAS Regional Office.

For programs conducting group prevention services:

- The delivery of prevention services and activities in an in-person group setting may resume so long as the following precautionary measures are met (see below). Distance learning platforms, however, should continue to be widely used for the delivery of prevention services, to reduce visits to office spaces and allow for the maintenance of social distancing.
 - When face-to-face services are provided, the program must adhere to any and all procedures of facility hosts where they are tenants and must also have their own infection control policies and protocols. They must adhere to social distancing and require mandatory surgical masks and optional eye protection (face shield and/or goggles) for staff and mandatory face coverings for clients.
 - Activities outdoors should be encouraged whenever possible. One-on-one indoor activities (with social distancing and mandatory surgical masks and optional eye protection [face shield and/or goggles] for staff and mandatory face coverings for clients) are safer than group activities. However, any indoor group activities should be of limited size (no more than 50% of room occupancy allowance with a maximum of twenty persons) and duration (less than an hour).
- Please note that local health departments and the NYS DOH have the ability to place further restrictions on the activities at programs as the result of contact tracing or outbreak investigation activities. If this occurs, programs should immediately notify the OASAS Regional Office.

Questions regarding this guidance should be sent to Prevention@oasas.ny.gov.