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Executive Deputy Commissioner

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Dear Provider:

The Office of Mental Health has received numerous inquiries from providers related to the COVID-19 virus. We are currently developing a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document based on the questions and concerns that have been shared. At the same time, we are also looking into options to create short-term regulatory flexibility.

At this time, we are encouraging all providers to develop, or revise their current continuity of operations plans as it relates to the COVID-19 outbreak. In developing the plan, please be sure to consider the following, among other categories:

- Assure that individuals can obtain medications (i.e. prescription refills, pharmacy services for residential programs, controlled substances, administration of injectables).
- Plan for the provision of and/or access to mental health and SUD treatment and support services, including food and nutrition for residential recipients.
- Identify a mechanism for access to additional required services (i.e. laboratory services).

Please also review guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New York State Department of Health, and SAMHSA. We are including links to those and other websites to provide you with helpful information. If you continue to have questions, you can contact the your regional OMH field office who will coordinate responses with the OMH Bureau of Emergency Preparedness and Response. When contacting your field office, please use the main number found at <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/aboutomh/fieldoffices.html> and inform staff that you are calling related to COVID-19.

In addition, **all programs (including unlicensed programs) that anticipate an interruption or suspension of operations for any period of time due to the COVID-19 outbreak should follow the normal protocol for communicating with their field office and local governmental unit.**

Due to the volume of requests for regulatory flexibility and operational guidance, OMH is unable to respond to each inquiry individually. We will, however, continue to update guidance and FAQs over time which will be posted on the OMH website at <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/guidance/>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

NYS Department of Health – COVID-19

<https://health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

SAMHSA Developing a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/section-223/governance-oversight/continuity-operations-plan>

ASPR Tracie-Topic Collection: Continuity of Operations (COOP)/ Business Continuity Planning

<https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/technical-resources/17/continuity-of-operations-coop-business-continuity-planning/110>

FEMA Continuity of Operations website

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/72598>