



# South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

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**SITUATIONAL REPORT NO. 33, DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2020**

**EVENT COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

## **I. PROVIDER RELIEF FUNDING-PHASE 3:**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), is announcing \$20 billion in new funding for providers on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic. Under this Phase 3 General Distribution allocation, providers that have already received Provider Relief Fund payments will be invited to apply for additional funding that considers financial losses and changes in operating expenses caused by the coronavirus. Previously ineligible providers, such as those who began practicing in 2020 will also be invited to apply, and an expanded group of behavioral health providers confronting the emergence of increased mental health and substance use issues exacerbated by the pandemic will also be eligible for relief payments. Providers can begin applying for funds on Monday, October 5, 2020. To learn more, click [here](#).

## **II. APPROVAL OF SOUTH CAROLINA'S APPENDIX K-RETAINER PAYMENTS:**

As part of the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (SCDHHS) ongoing response to the state and federal states of emergency related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), SCDHHS has sought and received approval to issue "temporary retainer payments" to certain home and community based services providers in South Carolina. The approval letter, which applies to the waivers listed below in Table 1, was issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on Sept. 22, 2020. The [letter](#) and [Appendix K amendment](#) are available on SCDHHS' [COVID-19 website](#).

## **III. DDSN LICENSING UPDATE:**

Effective October 1, Alliant will begin completing on-site Licensing Reviews. Providers will receive a 48-hour notice prior to the Licensing Review and Alliant staff will inquire about any COVID-19 residents or staff in the home. If there are positive cases, Alliant will work with the provider to reschedule the inspection. Alliant will be using PPE and practicing social distancing measures. This is consistent with DHEC procedures in other settings and CMS guidance to resume certification and licensing activities.

A copy of the Residential and Day Licensing Review instruments can be located at the following links:

[Residential Licensing Review Indicators](#)

[Day Services Licensing Review Indicators](#)

#### **IV. DDSN PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE SURVEYS:**

Effective October 1, Alliant will begin completing Participant Experience Surveys (formerly known as Residential and Day Observations). Residential surveys will be scheduled in advance with the provider agencies and will mostly take place as “porch interviews” when conditions permit. Alliant will be using PPE and practicing social distancing measures. The early focus will be for settings providers are required to submit Heightened Scrutiny Response packages for HCBS Compliance.

A copy of the survey instruments has been included on the DDSN Website at the following link:

[Day Services On-Site Review Tool](#)

[Residential Services On-site Review Tool](#)

#### **V. CMS GUIDANCE UPDATE-EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TESTING:**

CMS regulations for Emergency Preparedness require specific testing exercises be conducted to validate the facility’s emergency program. This requirement applies to Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs). During or after an actual emergency, the regulations allow for an exemption to the testing requirements based on real world actions taken by providers and suppliers. This worksheet presents guidance for surveyors, as well as providers and suppliers, with relevant scenarios on meeting the testing requirements in light of many of the response activities associated with the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE). The updated guidance can be found [here](#).

#### **VI. OPERATION WARP SPEED (OWS):**

Using the resources of the federal government and the U.S. private sector, Operation Warp Speed (OWS) will accelerate the testing, supply, development, and distribution of safe and effective vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics to counter COVID-19 by January 2021. OWS is leveraging the best, most talented experts from across the federal government and private industry to develop safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics quickly without compromising safety. To learn more about this unprecedented national initiative [click here](#).

#### **VII. DHEC UPDATED INTERIM GUIDANCE ON TESTING FOR COVID-19:**

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, the SC Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC) released updated guidance on testing for COVID-19. Because of the potential for asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission, it is important to perform diagnostic testing of persons with symptoms AND those who are close contacts to cases with COVID-19, as well as conduct screening testing of persons without symptoms or known close contact. Close contact is defined as within six (6) feet for 15 minutes or more. Under some circumstances, exposure of less than 15 minutes may be sufficient to transmit the disease (e.g., forced expiration face to face in athletic events, or close exposure to copious secretions), and exceptions must be considered. The updated guidance can be found [here](#).

**VIII. DHEC OVERVIEW OF ISOLATION & QUARANTINE FOR COVID-19:**

Isolation, quarantine, and contact tracing remain essential elements to limit the transmission of COVID-19 in the community. This health alert serves as a reminder of the current CDC/DHEC guidance outlined in previous SCHAN releases. Although there have been no major changes in the current guidance, the rapidly evolving nature of this situation can present a challenge in keeping up with current guidelines and credible sources of information. This Health Alert Network (HAN) serves to bring current recommendations and practices for Isolation, Quarantine, and Contact Tracing together. The overview of isolation and quarantine for COVID-19 guidance can be found [here](#).

**IX. CDC 2020-2021 FLU VACCINE CAMPAIGN KICKOFF : (CLICK HERE)**

Getting a Flu vaccine this year is more important than ever. This week CDC and other public health and medical partners kicked off the 2020-2021 flu vaccination campaign, emphasizing the added importance of flu vaccination this season due to the potential for flu and SARS- CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) to spread at the same time. October is a good time to get vaccinated, but as long as flu viruses are circulating, flu vaccinations should continue even in January or later.