



April 11, 2020

**Documentation Guidance for Children's Day Treatment Programs  
Regarding Emergency Response to COVID-19**

**Introduction**

As a result of the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency, service delivery across the system has transformed into a largely telemental health service modality. Although telemental health is a useful tool in these circumstances, it does pose challenges for Children's Day Treatment programs. To address these concerns, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) is issuing documentation guidance intended to reduce the administrative burden on program staff, while ensuring the best possible provision of ongoing care and support.

New York State is in the midst of a rapidly evolving public health emergency, and guidance and recommendations are being updated frequently. OMH is working closely with the Department of Health and Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services to put in place program expectations and reduced billing standards, which will be announced in guidance, as soon as possible. Providers should regularly review [OMH's Guidance Documents page](#) for updates.

**Changes in Documentation Requirements during the Disaster Emergency:**

For existing clients during the disaster emergency, or until such time as supplemental guidance is issued:

- Treatment plan reviews are not required and may be postponed as needed.
- Providers may work under existing treatment plans and provide additional services, as needed, to ensure continuity of care and address mental health needs related to the disaster emergency.
- The need for additional services which were not already documented in the treatment plan should be documented, in a progress note, and approved by a physician at the earliest practicable time during or after the disaster emergency.

For new clients admitted during the COVID-19 disaster emergency, or until such time as supplemental guidance is issued:

- OMH's expectation that admissions remain open does **NOT** apply to Children's Day Treatment, when school districts are closed. OMH recognizes that admission to children's day treatment is dependent on school district/SED approval.

**Utilization Review**

Providers may suspend their Utilization Review process for the duration of the disaster emergency. It is OMH's expectation that this process will resume once the disaster emergency is over.