



Substance Use Disorder Compliance Guidance Letter

Number: GL 20-3001-A
Title: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Control and Emergency Preparedness in Chemical Dependency Treatment Facilities (CDTFs) [Amended]
Provider Types: CDTFs
Date Issued: August 5, 2020

1.0 Subject and Purpose

This amended guidance letter replaces the previous GL 20-3001, issued on March 31, 2020, to instruct providers to notify the applicable local health authority or local health department if any client tests positive for COVID-19 and use [Form 3215](#) to notify HHSC of any program closures or temporary suspensions in service.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) provides guidance to licensed CDTFs. Concerning COVID-19 and based on Governor Greg Abbott’s Executive Order issued on March 19, 2020, HHSC instructs all CDTFs to take precautionary measures, including but not limited to implementing steps for infection control and prevention, reviewing and updating emergency response plans in preparation for implementation, limiting the number of visitors to the facility, and establishing communication plans.

This letter outlines provider responsibilities and expectations.

2.0 Policy Details & Provider Responsibilities

As CDTFs are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all clients, below are steps HHSC recommends CDTFs to take to decrease the potential spread of COVID-19, prepare for implementation of emergency procedures, and ensure infection control measures are implemented. In the event

facilities are unable to meet any of the provider responsibilities due to circumstances beyond the provider's control, the facility should document the reason for not fulfilling the responsibility and the actions taken to ensure the health and safety of clients. Documentation should be retained until the next onsite inspection conducted by the Substance Use Disorder Compliance Unit and provided to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

2.1 Prevention and Education. To decrease the potential spread of COVID-19, implement the following measures at each CDTF:

- Limit all interactions in the facility to groups of 10 people or fewer,
- Review and implement basic hand washing hygiene strategies with all staff and clients,
- Routinely disinfect all work and community areas,
- Provide infection control and prevention postings throughout the facility, and
- Stay up to date on the latest COVID-19 information by visiting the "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)" web page provided on the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) website at dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/.

2.2 Emergency Preparedness. Be prepared to implement emergency procedures for a minimum of two-week intervals. Consider which medications, food, cleaning supplies, and staff resources are required to implement the emergency response plan.

2.21 Staff and Program Operations. Ensure all staff know their roles in each phase of the emergency response plan. Prepare for potential client surges and coordinate with other programs in the area regarding emergency response plans. CDTFs are encouraged to work together to ensure continuity of client care.

Identify how the facility will operate in the event of a quarantine and how self-quarantine protocols could impact staff travel.

Residential and ambulatory medication withdrawal programs must ensure adequate medical personnel are present and available at all times.

2.22 Communication. Establish an ongoing communication plan for staff, clients, and clients' family members and prepare staff and clients for emergency situations by discussing the emergency response plan and sharing stress management tips and techniques.

2.3 Visitors. CDTFs should permit only essential visitors to enter the facility. Essential visitor means government personnel performing their official duty; a parent of a minor who is a client; an attorney or other legally authorized representative of a client; no more than one family member of a client at a time; and a clergy member authorized by the facility. Essential visitors should be screened for the following:

- Fever or signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat;
- Contact in the last 14 days with someone who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, is under investigation for COVID-19, or is ill with respiratory illness; or
- Travel within the previous 14 days to a country with sustained community transmission. For updated information on affected countries visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

The facility should prohibit any visitor or staff presenting with any of the above signs and symptoms from entering the facility and identify alternative methods for family counseling to further decrease the spread of COVID-19.

2.4 Admissions and Client Treatment. Screen all current clients and new admissions for the COVID-19-related indications listed above and **notify the applicable local health authority or local health department if any client tests positive for COVID-19.**

In adult outpatient programs treating symptomatic clients who require ongoing counseling, consider alternative methods for individual counseling to ensure continuity of care.

2.5 Other. Program closures are not expected to occur. However, all program closures and temporary suspensions in service must be reported to and coordinated with SUDCU and the Health Facility Licensing Unit using [Form 3215](#), Emergency Disaster Notification. **The hospital or emergency room is not an acceptable back-up plan to continue medication withdrawal management.**

CDTFs must document all actions, emergency plan revisions, and any adverse events experienced by staff and clients.

3.0 Background/History

CDTFs are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of clients. State and federal guidance indicates that COVID-19 presents a significant health

and safety risk, and HHSC instructs CDTFs to take precautionary measures to mitigate the spread of the virus.

4.0 Resources

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) web page on the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) website: dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/

Form 3215, Emergency Disaster Notification, provided at <https://texashhs.secure.force.com/EMR3215/>.

Governor Greg Abbott's Disaster Proclamation, provided at https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/DISASTER_covid19_disaster_proclamation_IMAGE_03-13-2020.pdf.

Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order No. GA-08, provided at https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/EO-GA_08_COVID-19_preparedness_and_mitigation_FINAL_03-19-2020_1.pdf.

For updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

For the latest federal guidance for chemical dependency treatment facilities: <https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus>.

To receive future updates, sign up for GovDelivery: <https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXHHSC/subscriber/new>.

5.0 Contact Information

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact the Policy, Rules, and Training Section by email at: HCR_PRT@hsc.state.tx.us.