



## **COVID-19 Substance Use and Misuse Prevention Guidance**

**Updated Sept. 2, 2020**

**Please note:** As the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly evolving, this guidance document may not be an exhaustive resource for Substance Use and Misuse Prevention providers. The FAQ document located at the link below is updated when new information is available, so please routinely review it.

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-provider-information>

HHSC realizes that substance use and misuse prevention programs are deeply rooted in communities across Texas, and as public health concerns increase, it is incumbent upon HHSC to provide guidance to ensure the safety of the prevention workforce and the communities in which funded providers serve. HHSC wishes to remain vigilant in its support of substance use and misuse prevention programs and feels it is imperative that it relax required contractual performance measures until the COVID-19 pandemic can be further evaluated and the threat to public health is mitigated.

Outlined below are related impacts and HHSC's expectations and recommendations regarding substance use and misuse prevention programs, including Youth Prevention Indicated (YPI), Youth Prevention Selective (YPS), Youth Prevention Universal (YPU), Community Coalition Partnerships (CCP), Prevention Resource Centers (PRC), and Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS).

While HHSC is making recommendations on specific performance measures, it is up to the funded providers to identify ways that their workforce can continue to reach and impact the community, based on organizational capacity. Of course, funded providers are advised to follow the COVID-19 [recommendations set forth by Gov. Greg Abbott](#), specific guidelines from their local public health departments, and those of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

### **Performance Measures**

HHSC intends to relax the enforcement of certain performance measures requiring face-to-face interaction related to all prevention contracts from March 15, 2020,



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until further notice. Organizations that have the capacity may continue to provide prevention engagement services in-person and utilize web-based or media platforms — including agency websites, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and any other traditional media platform — to educate and mobilize the community and promote health and wellness during this challenging time.

HHSC recommends all services be provided in accordance with local health directives and CDC guidelines and recommendations. In addition, HHSC encourages organizations to prioritize the safety of staff and community members participating in prevention activities and strategies. Personal protective equipment is considered an allowable expense for staff and participants. Prevention services via virtual platforms, such as Google Classroom and Zoom, are allowable methods of engagement. Additional guidance on allowable expenditures specific to COVID-19 can be found on the [Behavioral Health Services COVID-19 FAQ \(PDF\)](#).

### **Performance Measures Not Affected**

HHSC intends to continue reporting the following performance measures for the specified programs:

#### **YPU, YPS, YPI**

- Number of social media messages related to the statewide media campaign.

#### **CCP**

- Number of media awareness activities and number of social media messages focused on the state's four prevention priorities and the statewide media campaign.
- Number of media contacts focused on the state's four prevention priorities.

#### **PRC**

- Number of media awareness activities and number of social media messages focused on the state's four prevention priorities and the statewide media campaign.
- Number of media contacts focused on the state's four prevention priorities.



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- Number of prevention trainings coordinated or hosted in the region (all must be web-based).
- Number of adults attending trainings coordinated or hosted in the region (all must be web-based).

### **Areas and Activities Specifically Affected**

#### **YP Programs**

HHSC supports communities in teaching curricula lessons virtually in accordance with the guidance established by the curriculum developer. For more information on current developer guidance, visit the [HHSC Texas Prevention Training website](#). HHSC is working with C.A.R.E. Consulting to update resources as they become available. HHSC encourages the use of the Virtual Activity Tracking Tool to document modified prevention services that community organizations are implementing to suit virtual delivery. Moving forward, HHSC is collaboratively working to establish guidance around data reporting/form usage requirements and performance measures other than those related to social and media awareness campaigns. These should be reported in the Clinical Management for Behavioral Health Services (CMBHS) data system. HHSC will distribute this guidance for fiscal year 2021 through usual communication methods, such as distribution lists and the prevention forums. HHSC will not enforce contractual requirements around pre- and post-tests at this time but defers to curriculum developers for the implementation and specific requirements related to curriculum pre- and post-tests.

#### **Tobacco Coordinators**

HHSC encourages organizations with funded Prevention Resource Centers to consider all guidance from local health authorities/departments, state and federal recommendations, and CDC recommendations when determining whether to conduct voluntary tobacco retailer compliance checks.

#### **Data Coordinators**

Regional Needs Assessment (RNA) development, data-gathering and other administrative functions related to the RNA may be conducted remotely or in-person as determined by the funded organization and in coordination with HHSC.



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### **Reporting**

- Prevention performance measures related to media should continue to be reported in CMBHS by the 15th of the month following the month being reported, as outlined in the statement of work.
- Organizations should document community service barriers and challenges, which may include school and district closures, business closures and an inability to access participants in schools or other community sites, etc.
- CCP — The required CCP implementation plan and related documentation, due March 30, 2020, is postponed until notification by HHSC.

### **Suggested Activities**

- Virtual activities and events via Instagram, Facebook and other social media platforms can be used to engage the community and promote positive, healthy choices.
- Posting of statewide and local media content on organizational Facebook and Instagram platforms is encouraged.
- HHSC encourages organizations to contact their assigned program specialist to strategize any unique options for virtual service delivery. Once approved, these methods and activities may be shared on the prevention forums to further their implementation and reach.

### **Training**

The HHSC Texas Prevention Training (TPT) entity and C.A.R.E Consulting, along with public relations coordinators, are working together to provide and promote online training opportunities to build capacity and support the prevention workforce so it can continue to support communities. Web-based trainings — such as the Prevention Skills Training (15 hours), Ethics in Prevention Training and ASK About Suicide to Save a Life courses — will occur as scheduled at this time. Additional web-based training opportunities that may be of interest at this time are also available on the TPT website, such as [Psychological First Aid](#).



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Organizations are encouraged to continue monitoring the [HHSC TPT website](#) for updates and training opportunities. Public relations coordinators are also encouraged to continue utilizing web-based and social media platforms to engage and inform the community on prevention and other behavioral health-related information and trainings.