

Information on Division and Licensing Operations

Are Division and Licensing offices still open?

Division and Licensing offices are operating as usual. Although working conditions may change in the future based on direction from the federal or state officials, all critical functions will continue to be performed. The Division On-Call and other phone lines will still be answered as usual. The Division On-Call number is 1-800-832-9173.

Will enforcement of licensing and other program guidelines change, such as those related to Komninos' Law and Tara's Law?

All licensing and program guidelines remain in effect. Investigations of abuse, neglect and exploitation will continue unchanged. Failure to meet guidance for hygiene, cleaning/disinfection, sanitation, and other aspects of client safety will result in both immediate and prospective negative licensing action.

The Department and the Division are required to enforce the statutory protections created by these laws, as follows:

- Department staff will continue to perform the incident verification and site visits required by Komninos' Law.
- Provider staff must continue to call 911 in situations where a prudent person could reasonably believe that a life-threatening emergency exists.
- Monthly case management contact for community care residences will continue.

Will Support Coordinators continue to meet with individuals in person?

Effective March 13, 2020, the Division directed Support Coordinators and Division staff to begin conducting meetings by video or phone and to meet in-person only if necessary for health and safety of the individual. Routine quarterly and annual visits will be conducted electronically or by telephone until further notice.

If there are service or billing changes, how will this be updated in iRecord?

Support Coordinators will eventually need to document all plan changes but services should be modified by providers now to ensure the health and safety of the individuals we serve. Please document all services provided and hours worked. Individuals will work with their Support Coordinators to update service plans as soon as possible, and no later than May 1, 2020.

Is there a way to expedite the hiring of staff, including SDEs, to provide additional services or hours?

Providers are encouraged to develop innovative staffing models to meet critical short-term and backup needs. This may include things like extending offers to family members of individuals who are willing and able to work with their loved ones.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will provide expedited approval of emergency hiring requests. This includes SDEs. The provider or fiscal intermediary will follow the below process:

- Check the Central Registry of Offenders (<https://cro.dhs.state.nj.us>) before offering emergency applicants a position. If the applicant is not listed on the Central Registry, you may offer them a position and begin onboarding. The employee can begin training but may not have client contact until the background check has been

completed. DHS will determine if the person was previously cleared for hire and advise the agency promptly.

- Email requests to hire to DHS.ECCU@dhs.nj.gov with the subject line “REQUEST TO HIRE” – in the body of your email, including the following applicant or employee information:
 - Full first and last name;
 - Date of birth;
 - Last four digits of the person’s social security number.

DHS will determine if the person has already cleared the federal and state background check. If so, the employee may work without restriction. If not, the employee may work alongside another employee with at least one-year of direct care experience until the background information can be completed. Once the updated or initial background check is complete and clear, the employee may work without restriction.

The following timelines have been modified to accommodate expedited provider hiring:

- Pre-employment drug testing must be completed within the first 120 days of employment.
- Child Abuse Registry Information but must be completed within the first 120 days of employment.
- Training requirements for newly hired staff or day program staff working at a residential site.
 - The following training must be completed prior to first shift:
 - Emergency Evacuation Plan;
 - Special needs of the individuals residing in the home (e.g, diet, positioning, devices, transfers, seizure protocol, health needs);
 - On call system including information related to who is in charge and who is called if there is a problem;
 - Fire alarm systems; and
 - The Provider must also give the staff member a copy of the agency’s Policy and Procedure Manual.