

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Stakeholders

FROM: Valerie J. Vicari
Acting Deputy Secretary *Valerie J. Vicari*
Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

RE: County Mitigation Plan: OMHSAS Essential Functions

DATE: March 14, 2020

PURPOSE:

Governor Wolf announced mitigation strategies to stop the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Montgomery and Delaware Counties effective Friday, March 13, 2020. The mitigation strategies will be effective for 14 days. The Governor's mitigation plan for Montgomery and Delaware Counties includes: (1) A no visitor policy will be implemented for correctional facilities, nursing homes, Norristown State Hospital as well as all other state psychiatric hospitals and South Mountain Restoration Center; (2) Schools and child care centers licensed by the Commonwealth will be closed; (3) Adult day care centers will be closed and; (4) While travel is allowed, it is requested that people refrain from non-essential travel. The purpose of this communication is to outline functions managed by the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) that will be suspended and the essential functions that will continue during the implementation of the Montgomery and Delaware Counties mitigation plan. If this mitigation strategy is applied in other counties/regions in the state, OMHSAS will take a similar approach.

DISCUSSION:

OMHSAS has determined that the following functions and activities are being suspended in Counties that the Governor announces mitigation strategies:

- Annual licensing site visits.
- All temporary leaves and off-site activities for individuals in treatment at Norristown State Hospital (NSH).
- Admissions and discharges from NSH will remain suspended until re-evaluation on Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

In person communication with county staff, legal representation or external consultations will be conducted through video or telephonic communications except in extraordinary circumstances.

The following have been identified as essential functions by OMHSAS. Additional operational guidance will be provided to staff involved in these operational areas. Regional Field Office staff will continue to be accessible via telework if necessary.

- **Licensing** – Complaints will be followed-up on and investigated as appropriate.
- **Abuse and Neglect Investigations** – Critical investigations, including investigations received from Childline, Adult Protective Services, Older Adult Protective Service and State Hospital, will continue using remote methods/telephone whenever possible. When report suggests a person is at imminent risk staff will investigate on site.
- **Norristown State Hospital** – Direct care for all individuals in treatment will continue. All essential staff are to continue to report for duty unless they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or have received a presumptive positive test result for COVID-19. Discussions with the mental health courts on the handling of civil recommitment hearings remain ongoing.