



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

*Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services  
Promoting Recovery, Resilience & Self Determination*

**Jill Bowen, Ph.D.**  
Acting Commissioner

**Roland Lamb**  
Deputy Commissioner

**Sosunmolu Shoyinka, MD, MBA**  
Chief Medical Officer

**DBHIDS Provider Notice:  
COVID-19 Update  
Nov. 18, 2020**

## **DBHIDS Guidance: No Changes to Healthcare Services Under New 'Safer at Home' Restrictions**

Earlier this week, the [Philadelphia Department of Public Health issued new "Safer at Home" guidelines](#) intended to help stem the ongoing surge of COVID-19 cases in and around the city. These new guidelines further limit the sizes of gatherings and affect how some businesses operate -- but they have no impact on the essential services provided to Philadelphians.

**As a reminder: All healthcare, including behavioral health and intellectual disability services, remains essential. The adaptations initiated in the spring continue to serve us well in these times of expanded restrictions. Our network continues to serve those with behavioral health challenges through the safest means possible. This includes the expanded use of telehealth under state and federal guidelines.**

Health services are essential to the city. All providers should continue to work within the guidelines you have used in recent months and in accordance with the existing Continuity of Operations Plans. We encourage all providers to also review policies issued in March 2020 regarding [telehealth](#). We also encourage providers to review and follow [guidance](#) issued by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health for [outpatient](#) and [other healthcare provider](#) types.

As the COVID-19 pandemic moves beyond the eight-month mark and Philadelphians experience the need to spend more time indoors -- and with the colder weather and holidays often the time when we open our homes to friends and family -- we may all experience some degree of anxiety and sadness fueled by uncertainty and isolation.

There is hope on the horizon as we hear about potential vaccines in our future. We remain most protected when wearing masks and following hand washing and safe distancing

guidelines. Walks in nature and at parks may prove good exercise for the body and the mind.

In addition to the work you do to care for your fellow Philadelphians, please remember to take care of yourselves and your loved ones. Remember that physical and social distancing are not the same and, while we continue to remain physically apart, our connections to others are more important now than ever.

If you have any questions about the [new Safer at Home guidelines](#) or how your business operates within COVID-19 restrictions, please contact Shara Epstein, MD, medical director for the PDPH Division of COVID-19 Containment at [shara.epstein@phila.gov](mailto:shara.epstein@phila.gov) or 215-218-3493; or contact Katie Daingerfield Fries, MPH, chief of staff for the PDPH Division of COVID-19 Containment at [kathleen.fries@phila.gov](mailto:kathleen.fries@phila.gov) or 201-513-8286.

**Jill Bowen, Ph.D.**

DBHIDS Acting Commissioner