Information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) for Family PACT Providers

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) continues to closely monitor the emerging COVID-19 situation, and encourages Family PACT providers to stay updated on COVID-19 developments. As the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in California rises, it is critical that Family PACT providers assess their office policies and follow recommended safety procedures and protocols from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to help prevent spread of the virus.

Preparedness Strategies

Family PACT providers should share current COVID-19 information and discuss preparedness strategies with their staff. To enhance the health and safety of Family PACT provider offices, DHCS encourages Family PACT providers to adhere to the CDC’s and CDPH’s recommendations to prepare for COVID-19. Some helpful preparedness strategies include but are not limited to the following:

- **Screen patients and visitors for symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., fever, cough, difficulty breathing) before entering your healthcare facility.** Providers can refer to the following resources on the CDC’s Guidelines for patient screening and Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for more information.

- **Ensure proper use of personal protection equipment (PPE)**
  Healthcare personnel who come in close contact with confirmed or possible patients with COVID-19 should wear the appropriate personal protective equipment.

- **Encourage sick employees to stay home**
  Personnel who develop respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) should be instructed not to report to work. Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.

- **Encourage adherence to the CDC’s recommendations**, including but not limited to the following steps, to prevent the spread of illness:
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
  - Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
Family PACT providers can also find helpful resources to download, print, and display in their clinics and offices to educate their patients on preventive best-practices and to enhance awareness of COVID-19. These resources are available in select threshold languages. Buttons and badges, videos, and news links can also be found on the Communications Resources page of the CDC website.

Please note that if you suspect a possible COVID-19 case, DHCS asks that you please report it immediately to your local health jurisdiction.

**Telehealth**

Family PACT providers may utilize existing telehealth policies as an alternative modality for delivering Family PACT covered services when medically appropriate, as a means to limit patients' exposure to others who may be infected with COVID-19, and to increase provider capacity.

- Please refer to DHCS’ existing policies relative to telehealth, which are outlined in the Medi-Cal Provider Manual: “Medicine: Telehealth” section.
- The telehealth Frequently Asked Questions document is posted to DHCS’ website.

**Additional Resources**

For additional COVID-19 information and resources, we encourage you to review the following resources:

- Latest news from California Department of Public Health (CDPH) about COVID-19 | En Español
- CDPH COVID-19 guidance
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 response | En Español | 中文
- Follow CDPH Twitter for the latest COVID-19 information