

- My name is Kevin Hancock and I'm the deputy secretary for the office of long term living with the department of human services. This is a very important third Thursday webinar. We will be talking quite a bit about updates relating to the crisis situation. We'll be providing updates that we have gained from our provider community. I'll start again. I was told that I was breaking up. I took my speaker off. My name is Kevin Hancock. I'm the deputy secretary. Okay. I was just told that people can hear me well so I'll continue with the way I'm doing right now. Again, my name is Kevin Hancock. I am the deputy secretary for the office of long term living.

We're going to be providing a third Thursday webinar update.

I apologize for reading this a couple different times.

Apparently those who are listening through audio may be having trouble hearing me and you should be able to provide requests through the questions.

Today we will talk about some updates from our federal partners with the centers for Medicare and Medicaid services from the department of human services, department of human services communications, department of health guidance.

I'm going to pause just for one second, please. Thank you.

>> [Please standby for captions]

>> Testing one more time to see if I am getting any feedback from the folks on the phone.

Apologize. We'll be with you in a moment. It's wonderful when you have to work remote. I am able to be heard. Kevin Hancock from the department of office of long term living. Apologize for the [inaudible-audio cutting in and out]

>> [Please standby for captions]

>> Okay, Kevin. Can you hear me?

>> I do. I turned the presentation over to you.

>> Okay. Not sure if anybody can hear me. Can folks see my screen?

>> Looks good, Jill.

>> Okay. Can you hear me? All right.

Great. So I have just learned from Heather Holman that you can see my screen and you can hear me. That's awesome. All right.

So as Kevin was saying, we are here to give some information updates on the COVID-19 issue and today's agenda we're going to cover information from our centers for Medicare and Medicaid services, CMS. They have provided us an update that we're going to share with you.

We're also going to share some department of health or DOH guidance and show you where you can find that information.

Department of human services communications of course, that's specific to our department.

Community health choices managed care organization or CHC-MCO update. So stakeholder communications to DHS and DOH including nursing facility associations regarding staffing and training, home and community-based providers regarding staffing, service organization flexibility and supplies. Participant advocates about CHC-MCO emergency preparedness efforts and eligibility flexibility and suggestions for flexibility and additional support are all being carefully considered and are largely supported if practical and prudent. So folks, we are open to ideas. We've been taking ideas on a daily basis and reviewing them, discussing internally and in the process of implementing many of those suggestions so do keep them coming. So DOH is the lead agency for the commonwealth response to COVID-19. Updates are provided frequently on the DOH website. I know they have just updated the website so please follow the link on the slide and you can receive regular -- their updates from the website multiple times a day. There's also a live update webcast on a daily basis that you'll be able to watch off of the DOH website. Under long term services and support, the office of long term living has distributed many operational recommendations for our long-term services and supports or LTSS providers. We will continue to do so, so please check the listserv and continue to check your emails for any updates that we are providing.

We are providing them as quickly as we possibly can. So a lot of the recommendations that we have received from our stakeholders are being -- like I said, are being entertained and they could be included in future updates to providers. As you know and I think you've heard this on the news and you've heard this from communications that have gone out, please ensure that you exercise and promote hygienic practices, review your agency's back up plan and infection control procedures, make sure that you report all suspected cases of COVID-19 to the department of health and OLTL and/or the participant CHC-MCO.

Please contact OLTL before making any changes to your business practice whenever possible. Long-term services and supports residential providers should follow state and federally issued guidance and document any actions that were taken and maintain evidence for why actions were taken. So please, you know, try and make sure that your organizations and your staff stay informed of the latest updates and the latest guidance. Service coordination.

Until further notice OLTL is providing flexibility to conduct monitoring and service plan meetings remotely using phone or video conferencing options.

Please reference the guidance document that was issued on March 17th for additional procedures and documentation requirements. Service coordinators should also be working with the participants to implement their emergency back up plans. So please service cored nail -- coordinates check the back up plans and they are current and up to date and viable in the event they need to be implemented. OLTL is asking that no reduction in service plans be implemented during this time of emergency. Service additions and updated authorizations will be expected when necessary. Nursing facilities around personal care homes, assisted living residencingsresidencings s, to department of health has guidance. OLTL is asking that all care homes and assisted residents implement and adopt the same guidance.

Upcoming communications from OLTL will address additional updates for personal care homes and assisted living residences, guidance for adult protective service providers. All new communications will be distributed through our OLTL listserv and all previously distributed communications can always be accessed at the link on this screen. For our CHC-MCO update. CHC-MCOs have established protocols to ensure the continuity of operations and services. These protocols continue to be updated as the situation evolves. The CHC-MCOs communication activities include participant letters and communications, provider guidance and update and frequent discussions with OLTL to address updates and emerging issues. So please note that we are having daily meetings with our CHC-MCOs and stakeholders to

ensure that we're staying on top of any issues so that we can adjust and address issues as they arise.

At this time I'm going to open it up for questions. We have multiple of our SNEs on the line that can address any questions that you might have.

>> Not seeing any questions yet. Are we able to share the slides? Absolutely. We will share the slides. Please standby. We're gathering a question.

>> Okay. Having again a little bit of technical difficulties so everyone else can read the questions but me. Isn't that fun? All right.

So is home care considered an essential service? The answer is yes. I'm going to be relying on some of my folks to share some of the questions with me until I can get this expanded.

Are there any areas of the state having more difficulty meeting LTSS needs than other areas? If so identify the problem and explain problems being addressed. At this point, no, we are not receiving any issues of missed shifts or folks not being able to receive their services anywhere in the state.

Next question. Possible exposure to participants. We are referring folks to disease protocols and the department of health guidance. Does the back up plan include family? Yes, it does. Can a caretaker take the family for out of town to visit family, visit museum and how far from their state can they go?

Honestly at this time, you know, I think you should check out the department of health website and review the recommendations from the governor. There really is a restriction on travel and exposure. You know, there's a lot of guidance on social distancing. So I would really recommend that you would refer to that information when trying to make a decision like that.

What accommodations are being made for participants who cannot hear on the phone? So we do right now have protocols for that. There will be -- if the managed care organizations and service coordinators are not able to contact hearing impaired participants they would be receiving a written notification. So a request for some examples if business changes. So a lot of the face-to-face engagement

that we previously have required we have been allowing telephonic out reach. So we're still trying to make sure that we're continuing business as usual with of course our restrictions for social distancing. So telephonic out reach is definitely being encouraged. Is there specific guidance for home care services?

This is being developed through the department of health. It will be published by the department of health so you do want to check out their website and any updates specific to our long term services and support will be distributed through our listserv. Next question. How can we provide personal care and social distancing at the same time? Totally understood for this population the social distancing is not something that is appropriate. So we're stressing the personal hygiene and ensuring that folks really make sure you wash your hands, make sure you're following that guidance. I know that folks are doing the best that they can under the circumstances. There is some specific guidance like I said that will be distributed out on the department of health website and there are some guidelines that are currently out there for folks that are providing personal care services to individuals. Groceries and supplies. Home care providers should assist their home bound participants to make sure they have what they need to safely stay in the community including support for food and supply access. What are your guidelines on high risk versus low risk? If that individual could clarify your question a little bit. Next question.

Since we can't get supplies to keep staff safe, gloves, Purrell, et cetera do you have any suggestion from getting supplies that are sold out from all suppliers right now? I do know that our secretary's office is trying to identify ways of getting supplies out and we will be following up with that. If you'd like to provide your contact information we can try and give you some suggestions for ways to acquire supplies. I mean, unfortunately the reality is that they're very hard to get ahold of right now and I know that hospitals are a priority but we are trying to make sure that individual servicing providers can get the equipment and supplies that they need to continue providing services. In the field reduction. So prior services will be maintained and should be maintained during the grievance period. Right now grievance hearings will likely be postponed until we can get through the crisis. So do make sure that you share services at this point in time will be maintained through the grievance process and reductions will not be occurring right now. Are we expecting no service disruption?

We are expecting -- yeah. We are expecting service disruptions. At this point in time we are not experiencing service disruptions but as we progress through the crisis we do expect that they'll be service disruptions and that's why we are looking

to be a little bit more flexible in how our services are being provided to mitigate any risk to our participants. I was unable to get through to the provider line and I emailed the OLTL but I'm not sure it was received. Can you reiterate the best way to contact OLTL? A little bit of update on OLTL this week as well as other program offices across the department. Folks are really working on the remote access as you know the governor did ensure that folks should be in a telework status. Our email to OLTL was appropriate. I'll make sure that we have follow up to you. Right now we do have provider line folks being activated and being able to take calls this week. So we expect as we get into next week things will be running a little bit smoother as we ensure that everyone is able to have connectivity. So we will be following up this week with emails. If you have not received a response please try and be patient. You can resend your information and we will respond. Do we have guidelines for hospitalizations for assisted living facilities and skilled nursing facilities? At this time hospitals will continue to follow safe discharge protocols and there will be more direction to come on that. Do we intend to stop or cut waiver services? No, we do not. At this time we are looking at ensuring that there is some flexibility and being able to meet individual needs but at this time we are not intending to stop or cut waiver services. Do we have an update on the enrollment services RFA?

At this time the timeline may be modified. We'll have better information later on in the week. More than likely next week we'll have a decision on that. So updates on act 150 services. Service assurance with service coordinators is a priority and it is underway. So we're currently doing out reach to service coordinators and ensuring that there's no interruption of services and requesting updates from all service coordinators that are currently serving act 150 participants. Is it true that all diagnostic testing for COVID-19 will be covered by Medicaid and Medicare? Yes, it is true, it is covered. Are there thoughts on remote shipping and installation?

Absolutely. We are open to creative ideas so if you do have some ideas on that, please send them into the office of long term living and we can review.

Do we have an update on federal background check release?

Currently that is under careful review so more to come on that.

Now I'm being told that I'm breaking up. I'm not sure if you -- if everyone can hear me.

Is that any better? Okay. So did folks hear the response about federal background checks?

There is a careful review of the federal background checks release so do expect some future guidance about that. I did see a question. If someone is receiving service with an open appeal to the decrease in service hours will the MCO adjust the original determination or just make effective dates after the establish end to the crisis period? Again at this time there will not be any reduction in service and right now grievances are currently going to be on hold until we get through the crisis. Do we have any appendix K guidance? That will be published shortly so please stay tuned. If someone is only receiving assistance like laundry and housekeeping will they continue to receive services? Is this seen as essential? At this time all the service plans services in place are continuing to be provided to individual participants. So items like that as we move forward clearly be on a case-by-case basis. If there's a need for laundry and housekeeping services to keep someone safe in their home, those services, yes, will continue to occur. Do we have guidelines for food delivery?

So there's some CDC guidance for clean services. At this time we have nothing specific to food delivery, so more to come on that. Please stay tuned.

Looking to see if we're receiving any additional questions. We received a question on Medicare part D that the med D coverage is not showing for the pharmacy. If you could email us directly with this specific case we'll be able to do some research and make sure that it's resolved. Is there any updated guidance on AVV? So the guidance has not been finalized but we are considering postponement to October 1st due to the crisis.

So, again, stay tuned for further guidance on that. Did receive a question about authorizations for the managed care organizations. So further guidance will be coming on that but I do know that our managed care organizations are looking to extend authorization periods in light of the crisis but do standby for future guidance from the managed care organization on that. Will we be considering telehealth for cognitive health?

We will continue any ideas to continue care. If you have specific ideas please send them to OLTL. We can discuss and exam the mandates. What happens if a consumer back up's plan tests positive for COVID-19?

Well, you definitely have to inform the service coordinator so that they can be prioritized for additional support so if a consumer's back up plan does test positive for COVID-19 please ensure that the service coordinator is informed so they can ensure that there is support put in place. Stay tuned.

We're looking for any additional questions. Should there be delays in reimbursement? No, there are no anticipated delays to provide a reimbursement. How are plans ensuring safety with center closures? Home-based care plans are in place for all the participants. Okay. We'll just give it another minute or two or any additional questions.

Are there any changes regarding CHC enrollment? Are AID and CEO still processing new applications? The answer is yes. Applications, new applications are still being processed. Will we be allowing additional home delivered meals?

The answer to that is yes. If it's identified it's needed additional home delivered meals will be authorized. How are the level of care assessments being conducted? At this point they are mainly and mostly telephonic so we are trying to be flexible in how the assessments are being conducted. We did receive a question about a particular nursing home stopping admissions. We've not heard this, any of these situations related to the virus. I can't speak to any individual cases such as that. We can follow up on that specific facility. Are stable meals being delivered as back up? I'm not clear on that but we will take that back and follow up and get an answer back out to you. That's it for the questions. Thank you so much for your participation and I really do apologize for all of the technical difficulties today. I think with everyone teleworking and not just for the department but across the board electronics are being impacted.

So thank you everyone for your participation. Please keep an eye out for the listserv and the department of health website for any updates. They're coming out frequently. Stay tuned. Thanks and have a great day.