

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19):

COVID-19 Information Tool

OMAP Announcement 04-07-2020-01

### **AUDIENCE:**

All County Administrators of the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP)  
All Brokers of the MATP  
All Contracted Transit Agencies of the MATP

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this communication is to advise all county administrators, brokers, and all contracted transit agencies (collectively referred to as MATP agencies), of the precautions necessary to ensure safe provision of non-emergency medical transportation services to Medical Assistance beneficiaries, including the need for all consumers and drivers to wear a [face mask](#) during the pendency of the governor's emergency disaster declaration related to the COVID-19 coronavirus.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### Determining the Need for MATP:

The use of MATP should be limited at this time, since many routine visits are not urgent, and elective procedures are currently prohibited in [certain medical facilities](#) under orders issued on March 19, 2020 from the Governor and Secretary of Health.

MATP agencies should triage consumers through their call systems and should screen consumers to advise them when to use MATP. MATP agencies should start by asking consumers to call their medical providers to see if a visit is necessary. Guidance is provided below regarding the priority of in-person medical visits.

#### Use of Alternatives:

The consumer's medical providers should be working with consumers and MATP agencies to determine if a face-to-face visit is necessary. An MATP agency may facilitate a three-way call with the consumer and the medical provider, contact the consumer's managed care organization's member services division or contact BFFSP to confirm that the face-to-face visit is necessary.

If contacting the medical provider to verify a consumer's appointment is part of the MATP agency's normal protocol, then the MATP agency staff may also verify that the requested medical appointment is necessary.

Many visits can be conducted through telemedicine based on recent [guidance](#) from OMAP. The following types of face-to-face visits should be prioritized:

- Dialysis;
- Chemotherapy;
- Radiation therapy;
- Intravenous therapeutic treatments that cannot be administered in a home setting;
- High-risk obstetrical care;
- Non-emergent but urgent clinical visits;
- Trips to pharmacies; and
- Medication assisted treatment (methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone).

Routine obstetrical visits and non-urgent follow-up for chronic conditions may be able to be performed using telemedicine. Routine physicals and well child visits may be rescheduled once the COVID-19 emergency is lifted.

Most elective procedures and routine non-emergent [dental visits](#) should not be scheduled.

#### Obtaining MATP:

If the visit is recommended by the medical provider, consumers should be asked if they or anyone in their household have any of the following:

1. A fever higher than 100.0 degrees or new respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat;
2. Had contact with a person (live with or are within 6 ft. for a 10 to 30 minute period) diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days; or,
3. Been diagnosed with COVID-19 or told by a medical provider that they may or do have COVID-19.

Safety:

As a reminder, all drivers and consumers using MATP must wear a face mask.

**If the answer to all three questions above is no**, then the consumer can use MATP and transportation *should* be arranged in a manner that limits the driver's physical contact with the consumer and allows for social distancing. This may require less people in a common vehicle or more individual rides.

**If the answer is yes to just one of either questions 1 or 2 above**, the consumer *can* use MATP under the following circumstances:

- The consumer should be transported as an individual ride;
- The consumer must wear a face mask prior to entering the vehicle. **If the consumer does not have a face mask, the trip should be denied;**
- The driver must also wear a face mask.

**If the answers to both questions 1 and 2 above are yes**, then the consumer *should not* use MATP.

**If the answer to question 3 above is yes**, then the consumer *should not* use MATP.

In situations where MATP is not advised, the MATP agency should advise consumers to call their medical provider for guidance about the need for an in-person visit or the need for non-emergent ambulance transportation. MATP agencies and medical providers should advise consumers to call 911 if they believe an emergency exists.

In situations where it is not advisable for the consumer to use MATP, the MATP agency, in addition to completing the referral form and issuing a written notice of denial, should make every effort to assist the consumer in finding suitable transportation, including non-emergency ambulance transportation. For those consumers who are in the fee-for-service delivery system, efforts may include contacting the Bureau of Fee-for-Service Programs (BFFSP) for further guidance or at a minimum, providing the consumer with the contact information. BFFSP's Intense Medical Case Management Unit may be reached at (717) 772-6777 (Ms. Jean Whitehead) or (717) 772-6782 (Ms. Mallie Carter).

For those consumers who are enrolled in a Managed Care Organization (MCO), efforts may include, contacting the consumer's MCO for further guidance or at a minimum, providing the consumer with the contact information.

When Individuals Who are COVID-19 Positive Should Be Allowed to Use MATP Again:

The Pennsylvania Department of Health recommends that persons with COVID-19 under home isolation be released from isolation after a minimum of three days (72 hours) after resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) **and** at least seven days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

If a consumer has been released from home isolation after testing positive for COVID-19, the consumer should be transported as an individual rider, and both the consumer and the driver must wear a facemask until all consumer symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.

Please refer to the diagram below, which provides a screening flow chart to determine whether use of MATP is appropriate for a consumer. Drivers should follow basic guidance on prevention of COVID-19:

1. Washing hands often with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if frequent hand washing is not possible;
2. Covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze, using a tissue or the inside of your elbow;



3. Limiting physical contact with consumers; and,
4. Cleaning the vehicle thoroughly after the consumer has been transported. See the [CDC website](#) for advice.

The Department of Human Services is temporarily increasing the mileage reimbursement rate per mile for personal vehicle use under MATP and will notify all MATP agencies of the increase in a separate notice. MATP agencies should encourage individuals to use personal vehicles whenever possible.

This guidance will remain in effect while a valid disaster declaration by the Governor related to the COVID-19 virus remains in effect. OMAP may re-issue this guidance as appropriate.

Visit the PA Department of Health's dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19. Please continue to check the DHS' COVID-19 [website](#) for updates for DHS providers. Thank you for your service to MATP consumers.

## MATP Providers Screening Flow Chart

