

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF AGING**Multipurpose Senior Services Program**

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Frequently Asked Questions - #2

Guidance for the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Released - March 17, 2020

1) Can MSSP care managers suspend home visits and make telephone calls instead?

Yes. The Department of Health Care Services received guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to submit a supplemental application to the Waiver. This application is referred to as an Appendix K application and allows for requests to change requirements in the event of an emergency.

This application includes the request for home visits to be suspended immediately. Effective immediately, document all telephonic care management (in lieu of home visits) in the progress notes. Facetime, Skype and Zoom are also approved methods for conducting enrollment and any care management activities.

2) Can Waiver Services funds be used to purchase masks for participants?

Yes. If there is an assessed need for a non-State plan covered benefit, the Application for a 1915(c) Home and Community Based Services Waiver states, "If needed services are not available through friends, family and other programs, the care management team can authorize the purchase of Waiver Services from program funds."

3) Can Waiver Services funds be used to purchase food for participants?

No. CMS disallowed all purchases of food citing 42 CFR §441.310(a)(2) which prohibits making Medicaid payments for room and board (i.e., housing, food, and utility costs). The submitted Appendix K also does not allow for purchases of food using Waiver Service funds. Delivery costs/fees can be billed under Home Delivered Meals (7.2); however, this does not include the purchase of actual food items. Sites can continue to utilize and recommend local resources and Older Americans Act nutrition programs as available.

4) Can enrollment for MSSP be completed telephonically?

Yes. Another request included in the submitted Appendix K application is for initial Level of Care assessments to be completed by record review, as well as Initial Psychosocial and Health Assessments and care plan re-evaluations to be completed telephonically. Facetime and Skype are also approved methods for conducting enrollment and any care management activities.

Applications, releases of information (AUDPHIs), care plans, and any other documents can be mailed for the participant's signature. CDA recommends documenting all relevant actions taken (mailing dates, verbal acceptance of the care plan, etc.) in the progress notes.

5) Do MSSP sites have to issue Notices of Action (NOAs) to participants for temporarily suspended or reduced Waiver Services?

No. Guidance was received from CMS that states that state fair hearing notification provisions do not apply for temporarily suspended or reduced Waiver Services due to the COVID-19 emergency since they are not permanent. Regular NOA requirements are still required for permanent discontinuances/denials, or permanent reductions/suspensions of services.