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# **COVID-19 Health Policy Questions**

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**The Governor's Committee on People with  
Disabilities**



# Panelists

- **Michelle Alletto**, Chief Program and Services Officer
- **Victoria Grady**, Director of Rate Analysis
- **Michelle Dionne-Vahalik**, Associate Commissioner of Long Term Care Regulation
- **Joe Perez**, Deputy Associate Commissioner of Rehabilitative and Independence Services
- **Dana Williamson**, Director of Policy Development and Support for Medicaid/CHIP
- **Danielle Lobsinger**, Government Relations
- **Roxann Medina**, Disability Services Coordinator



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# COVID-19 Response

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## Where to get more information on guidance:

- Clients
  - [COVID section on HHS site](#)
- Providers
  - [COVID section on HHS site](#)
  - [COVID section on TMHP site](#)



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# School and Health Related Services (SHARS)

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- Participating schools can seek Medicaid reimbursement if instruction is provided to a Medicaid-eligible student through telemedicine or telehealth.
- Must be billed using modifier 95
- HHSC does not require the IEP to be amended
- Must obtain informed consent
- TMHP contact center at 1-800-925-9126



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# School and Health Related Services (SHARS)

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- Audiology services
- Counseling services (psychologist or master's level clinician delivered)
- Occupational therapy
- Physician services
- Physical therapy
- Speech therapy



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# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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## You told us:

- There is a lack of PPE for home care providers and staff
- PPE is vital to group homes to keep people virus free
- Community and home supports should get the same level of protection as other essential workers

## You asked about:

- Available PPE for community attendants
- Available PPE for community-based group homes
- If homemade masks are appropriate



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# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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## HHSC response:

- Impacts all healthcare providers
- [HHSC Q&A on facemasks and N95 respirators](#)
- Homemade masks can be used if there are not active cases of COVID-19
- More ways on optimizing PPE are available at:
  - [Centers for Disease Control](#)
  - [Texas Department of Health Services](#)



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# Consumer Direct Services (CDS)

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## You asked:

- Will HHSC consider allowing parents to be paid as the attendant in the CLASS waiver even if they are the employer of record?

## HHSC response:

- Considering ways to support workforce shortages



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# Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

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## You asked:

- Can HHSC suspend and/or delay the implementation of the Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) requirements?

## HHSC response:

- Must use EVV no later than January 1, 2021
- HHSC does not have authority to extend deadline
- [Temporary EVV policies for COVID-19](#)



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# Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)

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## You asked:

- Increasing funding for Lifespan Respite Care to the ADRCs

## HHSC response:

- Can use current state general revenue funding to increase Lifespan Respite Care program
- Other funding requires approvals outside of HHS



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# Guardianship

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## You asked:

- Legal guardianship and hospital visitation

## HHSC response:

- [GL 20-2015](#)
- Legal guardians are included



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# Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

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## You asked:

- Accessible information
- Waive or amend contract stipulations in STAP



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# Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

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## HHSC response:

- Shared COVID-19 videos in ASL
- Governor Abbott's press conferences
- Monitoring local press conferences
- Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)
- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)
- Flexibilities for STAP
- Continuing to seek options for flexibilities



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# Personal Care and Community Attendants

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## You asked:

- A hiring initiative
- Regional outreach campaigns to increase the number of attendants
- Attendant wages
- Overtime pay, health insurance, and sick leave



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# Personal Care and Community Attendants

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## HHSC response:

- Fully implemented reimbursement rates
- Increase minimum wage
- Award all funding for Attendant Compensation Rate Enhancement Program
- Strategic plan for recruitment and retention
- Improve self-directed and person-centered practices
- Seeking ways to increase flexibilities during COVID 19 pandemic



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# Personal Care Workers and Hospitals

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## You asked:

- Bringing personal care worker to the hospital
- Information on hospital guidance

## HHSC response

- [GL 20-2015](#)
- State-funded personal support worker can be considered
  - A designated caregiver
  - An essential visitor performing official duties



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# Home and Community-Based Services

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## You told us:

- Concern for people losing services in HCBS

## HHSC response:

- Should not be a loss of Medicaid eligibility
- HCBS delivering essential services
- Essential services can vary
- Providers work with physician on what is essential



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# Group Home Plan For Positive COVID-19 Test

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## You asked:

- Plan for group homes when staff or residents test positive for COVID-19

## HHSC response:

- [PL 2020-22](#)



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# Enrolling in HCS

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## You asked:

- Discharged from nursing home or rehab facilities into HCS group homes

## HHSC response:

- [IL 2020-15](#)
- Postponing release
- Review and update guidance before May 1, 2020
- LIDDAs must continue enrollment for people who already received a slot



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# Skilled Nursing Facilities

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## You asked:

- Discussions on how to protect people in skilled nursing facilities

## HHSC response:

- Continue to monitor guidance from federal and state partners



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# State Hospitals, State Supported Living Centers, and Nursing Facilities

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## You asked:

- Prevention efforts in state hospitals, state supported living centers, and nursing facilities

## HHSC response:

- Implemented federal and state guidance
- Infection control efforts



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# 1135 Medicaid Waiver

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## You asked:

- 1135 Medicaid waiver impact on in-home supports
- Communicate the waiver changes

## HHSC response:

- Partial approval
- Several flexibilities
- [HHSC website](#)
- Sign up for gov.delivery



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# OT/PT Therapies

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## You asked:

- OT/PT in-home therapies taking place

## HHSC Response:

- MCOs has flexibility
- Fee-for-Service Medicaid
- CLASS waiver



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**Thank you**

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