



News Now

Mike DeWine, *Governor*
Lori Criss, *Director*

April 2, 2020

>>> BH Telehealth Training Webinar Recording and Slides Available

The Ohio Departments of Medicaid and Mental Health and Addiction Services this week hosted a training webinar for delivering behavioral health services via telehealth. A [recording](#) of the webinar and [slides](#) are available at: <https://bh.medicaid.ohio.gov/>. Please send questions related to clinical and technical implementation of telehealth to: COVID19BHTELEHEALTH@mha.ohio.gov. Questions about Medicaid coverage, billing, and reimbursement under the new policy can be submitted to BH-Enroll@medicaid.ohio.gov.



Additional Telehealth Resources:

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[March, 20, 2020 MITS BITS](#)

[Telehealth Billing Codes for Provider Type 84s and 95s](#)

[OhioMHAS: 5122-29-31 Interactive Videoconferencing \(Rule Amendment\)](#)

>>> Telecom Policies During COVID-19

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has started the [Keep Americans Connected Initiative](#) to ensure that Americans have reliable access to the online and phone resources they need to be able to stay at home. More than 650 companies have signed the Pledge to date. This means that for 60 days, these companies pledge to not terminate residential or small business services due to non-payment, to waive late fees, and to open Wi-Fi hotspots to anyone who needs them. In addition to signing the pledge, many telecom companies have adopted temporary COVID-19 policies and are offering free or reduced services and increased data usage limits during the coronavirus pandemic. For the most up-to-date information on these policies, click the links below for the following providers:

- [Charter Communications \(Spectrum\)](#): Free Spectrum Internet and Wi-Fi for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students and educators.
- [CenturyLink](#): Suspended data usage limits, offering increased broadband speeds.
- [Cincinnati Bell](#): Providing free speed upgrades.
- [AT&T](#): Two months of free service, and waiving data usage overage fees.
- [Verizon](#): Automatically adding hotspot data for customers.
- [Consolidated Communications](#): Two months of free home internet to low-income families.
- [Windstream Ohio, Inc./Kinetic](#): Discounts to any new Kinetic Internet customer who is qualified for Lifeline benefits.

>>> COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Blanket Waivers for Health Care Providers

The Trump Administration is taking aggressive actions and exercising regulatory flexibilities to help healthcare providers contain the spread of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is empowered to take proactive steps through 1135 waivers as well as, where applicable, authority granted under section 1812(f) of the Social Security Act (the Act) and rapidly expand the Administration's efforts against COVID-19. As a result, the following blanket waivers are in effect, with a retroactive effective date of March 1, 2020, through the end of the emergency declaration. These waivers DO NOT require a request to be sent to the 1135waiver@cms.hhs.gov mailbox or that notification be made to any of CMS's regional offices. Read [MORE](#).

>>> **Responding to the Alarm: Addressing Black Youth Suicide Webinar – April 21**

The Office for Disparities Research and Workforce Diversity at the National Institute of Mental Health, and the Office of Behavioral Health Equity at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration are partnering to host a free “Responding to the Alarm: Addressing Black Youth Suicide” webinar on April 21 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. The webinar will feature the co-authors of [Ring the Alarm: The Crisis of Black Youth Suicide in America](#), a report from the Congressional Black Caucus’s Emergency Taskforce on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health. Panelists will discuss the alarming rise in suicide and suicide-related behaviors in black youth and strategies to engage and care for these youth. Click [HERE](#) for more information and to register.

>>> **Buprenorphine Patient Limits Increased in First Year to 100 for Qualifying Practitioners**

Qualified practitioners who currently hold a DATA Waiver at the 30 patient limit are potentially eligible to treat up to 100 patients in the first year if they meet new criteria established by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Qualified practitioners include physicians, Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Physician Assistants (PAs), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNAs), and Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs).

Qualifying practitioners must satisfy one of the following two conditions to treat 100 patients in their first year:

1. The physician holds a board certification in addiction medicine or addiction psychiatry by the American Board of Preventive Medicine or the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
2. The practitioner provides medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in a "qualified practice setting." A qualified practice setting is a practice setting that:
 - provides professional coverage for patient medical emergencies during hours when the practitioner's practice is closed;
 - provides access to case-management services for patients including referral and follow-up services for programs that provide, or financially support, the provision of services such as medical, behavioral, social, housing, employment, educational, or other related services;
 - uses health information technology systems such as electronic health records;
 - is registered for their State prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) where operational and in accordance with Federal and State law; and
 - accepts third-party payment for costs in providing health services, including written billing, credit, and collection policies and procedures, or federal health benefits.

[After one year at the 100-patient limit, qualifying practitioners who meet the above criteria can apply to increase their patient limit to 275.](#) In addition, [42 CFR 8.655](#) defines circumstances in which qualifying practitioners may request a temporary increase to treat up to 275 patients to address emergency situations. Click [HERE](#) to apply for a patient waiver.

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634). For behavioral health-specific information, visit: <https://mha.ohio.gov/coronavirus>. For behavioral health-related questions, email covid19BH@mha.ohio.gov. For COVID-19-related OTP questions, email OTP_COVID19@mha.ohio.gov, for Housing questions, email COVID19Housing@mha.ohio.gov and for Telehealth questions, email COVID19BHTelehealth@mha.ohio.gov.

In the News

- 4.1.20 | *Zanesville Times-Recorder* [Mental health services remain open, critical during pandemic](#)
- 4.1.20 | *Bellefontaine Examiner* [Local, state resources offer mental health tips during pandemic](#)
- 4.1.20 | *Columbus Business First* [Study: Most Ohio communities lack resources to protect homeless from coronavirus](#)
- 4.1.20 | *Gallipolis Daily Tribune* [HRS: explaining COVID-19 safety to children](#)
- 4.1.20 | *Marion Star* [Managing emotional, mental health during coronavirus outbreak](#)
- 4.1.20 | *Cleveland Jewish News* [How to manage mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- 4.1.20 | *Coshocton Tribune* [Mental health tips during self-quarantine periods](#)

3.31.20 | *WKYC-TV* [Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services provides tips to manage stress during the coronavirus crisis](#)
3.31.20 | *WDTN-TV* [Miami Valley Warmline offers mental health support during pandemic](#)
3.31.20 | *WCMH-TV* [Battling addiction during the coronavirus shutdown](#)
3.31.20 | *Youngstown Vindicator* [Mental health adapts during the pandemic](#)
3.31.20 | *Pomeroy Daily Sentinel* [Suicide Prevention Walk goes digital](#)
3.30.20 | *WCMH-TV* [Ohio providers working to prevent mental health crisis during coronavirus pandemic](#)
3.27.20 | *WCPO-TV* [People living with addiction face new challenges with COVID-19 quarantines](#)

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