



The Department of Aging (PDA) understands there are concerns about the 2019-novel coronavirus (COVID-19). In light of rapidly evolving circumstances and actions taken to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, PDA is providing temporary guidance and is permitting flexibility for the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to deviate from existing policies and procedures for Aging Services Programs, including OPTIONS, Caregiver Support Program and Domiciliary Care. AAAs have the discretion to implement the following:

OPTIONS:

Essential Function	Guidance
Initial Assessment of New Consumers (NAT or NAT-E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AAA completes the NAT or NAT-E via telephone rather than face-to-face. • The AAA documents the reason for this exception in SAMS. • The AAA sends a copy of the initial care plan to the consumer for signature.
Income Verification/Financial Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AAA attempts to obtain income verification from the consumer (and spouse, if applicable). • The AAA has the flexibility to accept verbal verification of income for cost share purposes and income/assets for determining if a consumer needs to be referred to the Independent Enrollment Broker for Community HealthChoices.
MA-LTSS 90-Day Home Visit as Part of Mandatory MA Eligibility Determination Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 90-day home visit may be completed via telephone. • The AAA documents the reason for this exception in SAMS.
Annual Reassessments and Reassessments Due to Change in Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AAA completes the NAT or NAT-E via telephone rather than face-to-face. • The AAA documents the reason for this exception in SAMS. • If the care plan is updated based on the reassessment, the AAA sends a copy of the care plan to the consumer for signature.

Contact Plan for Consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The six (6)-month home visit contact may be completed via telephone rather than face-to-face. The AAA documents the reason for this exception in SAMS.
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Caregiver Support Program

Essential Function	Guidance
Initial Assessment of New Caregivers and Care Receivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AAA completes the Caregiver Assessment Tool (CAT) and NAT-E via telephone rather than face-to-face. The AAA documents the reason for this exception in SAMS. The AAA sends a copy of the initial care plan to the caregiver for signature.
Income Verification/Financial Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AAA attempts to obtain income verification for the care receiver's household. The AAA has the flexibility to accept verbal verification of income for reimbursement purposes.
6-month Reassessments of Caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AAA completes the CAT via telephone rather than face-to-face. The AAA documents the reason for this exception in SAMS. If the care plan is updated based on the reassessment, the AAA sends a copy of the care plan to the caregiver for signature.
Contact Plan for Wait-listed Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 6-month home visit contact may be completed via telephone rather than face-to-face. The AAA documents the reason for this exception in SAMS.

Domiciliary Care (Dom Care)

Essential Function	Guidance
Domiciliary Care Home Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDA recommends not certifying any new Dom Care homes at this time. The AAA may continue to receive new provider applications; however, the certification approval process may be delayed.

Domiciliary Care Home Recertification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AAA contacts the provider and consumers via telephone rather than conducting a face-to-face home visit. • The Dom Care provider is responsible for providing the AAA with documentation of the provider’s physical examination, if required at that time. • The AAA issues a letter that Dom Care home and provider certifications are extended for up to a 90-day period of time.
Initial Functional Eligibility Determination, MA-51 and Initial Assessment of Dom Care Applicants Within 15 days of Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDA recommends not accepting any new consumers at this time. • If the AAA decides to accept an individual, the AAA contacts the provider and consumer via telephone rather than conducting a face-to-face home visit.
6-month Reassessment to Assure Continued Adequacy of the Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AAA contacts the provider and consumers via telephone rather than conducting a face-to-face home visit.
Unusual Incidents – Confirmed cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AAA requires their Dom Care providers to report suspected exposure to or infection of COVID-19 directly to their county health department and/or the PA Department of Health within 24 hours.

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others circulating among animals, including camels, cats and bats.

COVID-19 is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person-to-person. This virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath.

Where can I find more information about COVID-19? The Pennsylvania Department of Health has a dedicated page for COVID-19 that provides regular updates. Click [here](#) for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19.

Additional information is also available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) website and through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services ([CMS](#)).