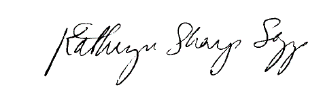
APS 21-02

July 29, 2020

**MEMORANDUM FOR DIVISION OF SENIOR & DISABILITY SERVICES**

**ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES STAFF**



**From:** Kathryn Sharp Sapp, Bureau Chief

Division of Senior and Disability Services

Bureau of APS Policy & Staff Development

**Subject:** COVID-19 Update: Restarting Face-to-Face Visits

As the state of Missouri continues to grapple with the Coronavirus (COVID-19), more information continues to become available regarding how to safely manage in-person interactions with others. As a result, Adult Protective Service (APS) staff will begin to conduct more face-to-face contacts with appropriate safety measures in place while also taking into account area and regional pervasiveness of active Coronavirus cases.  APS-Protective Service Unit (PSU) staff will complete home visits with Reported Adults (RA) when the RA’s safety, well-being, or situation cannot be completely and accurately assessed via phone or by contacting collaterals.  Likewise, APS-Special Investigation Unit (SIU) staff will complete face-to-face interviews with investigative leads or suspects when absolutely necessary to further investigations. These visits will be completed with the necessary precautions in place and should be discussed between APCW/Investigator IIs and their Supervisors before making any face-to-face contacts.

***Pre-Visit Phone Contacts:***

1. PSU staff shall contact the reporter, RA, and collaterals prior to completing a home visit to ensure that all available information has been obtained.
2. PSU staff shall attempt to contact the RA prior to conducting a field visit and ask the questions listed below. When possible, SIU staff should follow this process as well for witness, suspect, and/or victim interviews.

* Has anyone in the home been ill with Coronavirus or been exposed?
* Has anyone in the home had a fever in the last 24 hours?
* Does anyone in the home have a cough or shortness of breath?
* Has anyone in the home traveled to an area with widespread Coronavirus?
* Explain to the RA that we would like to meet with them to make sure that all of their needs are being met. Provide explanation of plans to visit will include wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing by talking on the porch or a minimum of 6 feet distance. *See previous memo* [*APS 20-07*](https://health.mo.gov/seniors/apsmanual/doc/aps-20-07.docx) *on Face-to-Face Contact for further details.*

1. If unable to contact the RA or lead by phone, or ascertain their well-being/needs through collateral contacts, staff must make a home visit. Once staff arrive on site, staff should attempt to contact the RA/lead and ask the above safety questions prior to approaching house.
   1. If they do not have a phone, staff should conduct the home visit by utilizing the below Field Visit Precautions.
   2. If capacity is in question or guardianship is being considered, PSU must make home visit utilizing the below Field Visit Precautions.

***Additional Considerations:***

Supervisors (PSU Supervisors & SIU Investigator IIIs) in consultation with their managers (Regional Managers or Investigations Manager) will make decisions about whether face-to-face visits are made. When making these decisions, supervisors and managers should consider 1) the safety of the client and worker, 2) the severity of the case or the allegations, and 3) the pervasiveness of Coronavirus in the area where the visit/face-to-face contact is needed.

Management staff should access the [Missouri COVID-19 Dashboard](http://mophep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=8e01a5d8d8bd4b4f85add006f9e14a9d) to review active cases in their area. The Dashboard is available to all at the following link:

<http://mophep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=8e01a5d8d8bd4b4f85add006f9e14a9d>.

Staff should pay particularly close attention to data regarding “7 Day Percent Increase in Cases” by county as well as “Total Cases Per 100K Population” per county. Additionally, the Section for APS will hold a brief web conference discussion with Marcia Davis, Disaster Response Coordinator, regarding the data available on the [Missouri COVID-19 Dashboard](http://mophep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=8e01a5d8d8bd4b4f85add006f9e14a9d). The call is scheduled during the APS Supervisor Conference Call on July 30th from 11-11:30am.

***Field Visit Precautions:***

The health and safety of our workers and the clients we serve is our highest priority. Because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that 1> Older Adults and 2> People with Underlying Medical Conditions are at increased risk for severe illness, it is important that APS staff take every possible precaution available when interacting with Department clients.

All APS staff will be required to wear a face mask when completing home visits.  Alternatively, face shields (full face protection) will be provided to all APS field staff and should be used when interacting with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Should a staff member be unable to wear a mask or face shield due to a documented medical condition, reasonable accommodations will be made.  Please coordinate with your supervisor if an accommodation is needed and refer to [Administrative Policy 3.3](http://dhssnet/policiesprocedures/doc/adminmanual3_3.doc) ([Workplace Adjustments and Accommodations for Employees with Permanent and Temporary Disabilities](http://dhssnet/policiesprocedures/doc/adminmanual3_3.doc)).

Staff should make every effort to maintain a safe distance from everyone while in the client’s home or other areas.  Staff should follow CDC’s recommendations for social distancing and stay six (6) feet away from others when possible. Staff should make face-to-face contact in an open-air space outside of a home or building when possible and practical. Hand sanitizer will be provided to each field worker and should be used immediately after every in-person contact if regular hand washing is not available. Staff should take other appropriate precautions like avoiding touching their face (eyes, nose, and mouth) with unwashed hands. Staff should also avoid shaking hands with others.

***General Division COVID-19 Guidelines:***

Staff should continue to follow the general Division guidelines in regards to monitoring their own condition and symptoms.

* **Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and be alert for symptoms in yourself, family, and friends.  The following symptoms have been associated with COVID-19:**
  + Fever, cough, and shortness of breath, congestion (runny nose)
  + Chills, body aches, severe fatigue, head ache, sore throat
  + Loss of smell and taste
  + Diarrhea
* **If you or someone in your family are experiencing these symptoms, you should:**
  + Stay home from work and self-isolate at home ([Caring for Someone Sick at Home (or Other Non-healthcare Settings)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html)
  + Contact your healthcare provider or local health department about testing or medical care
  + Seek emergency medical attention if someone is experiencing difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, is unable to be roused or other critical symptoms

***Remote Work:***

Due to the increased risk of the Coronavirus to the population that APS serves, staff are encouraged to continue to work remotely where feasible. While other Division and Department staff may resume working in state offices, etc., APS staff are encouraged to continue to work remotely so as to limit the potential for exposure from working around other state employees. If employees encounter challenges to working remotely, they are encouraged to reach out to their respective supervisor and management staff to help resolve the issue.

**NECESSARY ACTION:**

1. Review this memorandum with all APS staff.
2. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to the APS Policy & Staff Development Unit at [APSPolicy@health.mo.gov](mailto:APSPolicy@health.mo.gov) or by calling 573-526-0714.

TJ/KSS/MH