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**APS Policy Bulletin # 2022-01**

**Date: January 11, 2022**

**DISTRIBUTION: ALL CASE MANAGER STAFF**

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## **APS CASE MANAGEMENT WAIVER EXTENSIONS DUE TO COVID-19**

The purpose of this procedure is to inform all APS case management staff that the waivers granted by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) have been extended until June 30, 2022 to promote serving APS clients safely. This policy bulletin is informational for all other staff.

Due to health and safety concerns that have been raised in managing APS clients during the COVID-19 pandemic, OCFS has approved an extension of the following waivers to account for the safety of APS workers as well as our clients and ensure clients' service needs continue to be provided.

**NOTE:** Refer to APS Case Management During the COVID-19 Pandemic (**APS-PB #2021-02**) for further guidance.

### **Client Home Visits**

In consultation with their supervisor, caseworkers may utilize a variety of tools to adequately meet and assess clients' needs and to determine the safety and risk posed to an impaired adult. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Initiating contact by calling the subject or caregivers before going to the home; or
- Use of Skype, Facetime, videoconferencing, or other technological means.

Caseworkers must continue to document in APSNET the particulars of the situation and all alternative arrangements used to remotely contact clients and assess that their service needs are being met, which will be reviewed and approved by the supervisor.

An eligibility determination **must always include** a home assessment unless it has been determined that the visit will place the caseworker and/or the client at risk of exposure to COVID-19. Prior to conducting a home visit, the caseworker should first determine whether the person is at risk of exposure to COVID – 19 as described in **APS-PB-2021-02**.

Additionally, home visits continue to be waived when there is a health and safety risk to the caseworker. Remote client contact must encompass the ability to adequately assess the client. When health and safety risks to the caseworker cannot be established, the caseworker should discuss the issues with a supervisor.

### **Timeframe Waiver**

The waiver granted that expanded the timeframe for completing assessments/service plans from 60 days to 90 days has been extended. APS will continue to promptly and appropriately meet the service needs of individuals who are being assessed during this extended period.

### **Undercare Cases**

OCFS has extended the waiver of the requirement for monthly face-to-face contact during the COVID-19 pandemic for clients who are deemed stable (no indication or suspicion of abuse, financial exploitation, or unsafe environment). Caseworkers are required to document in APSNET all alternative arrangements used to remotely contact clients and assess that their service needs are being met. If alternative arrangements fail, a visit is required.

In accordance with the waiver, caseworkers must document remote contacts in APSNet as follows:

- Go to Monthly Visit:
  - Did you visit? Select “No”
  - Why visit has not been made? Select “Unable to complete”
  - Why were you unable to complete? Select “Other”
- Document the reason you were unable to complete in the progress notes – “Due to risk of exposure to COVID-19 on route and while interacting with the client or others.”

Caseworkers must include the details of the conversation in the progress notes.

*Effective Immediately.*

### **References:**

18 NYCRR 457.1(d)  
18 NYCRR 457.2(b) and (d)  
18 NYCRR 457.5(b)

### **Related Documents:**

**APS-PB-2021-02** APS Case Management During the COVID-19 Pandemic