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DHCS COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions: Driving-Under-the-Influence (DUI) programs

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Please see the [DHCS COVID-19 Response Website](#) for more information.

1. If the spread of the virus compels programs to suspend services for a period of time, can providers offer a leave of absence (LOA) to all participants?

Yes, in instances where there are no written protocols, and there is no local level direction provided regarding COVID-19, it is appropriate for the DUI program to suspend all DUI Program services for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency and allow for LOAs for each affected participant. Providers should be prepared to refine their response plans as needed. A LOA granted for COVID-19 purposes should be in written format and maintained in the participant's file. The documentation should identify COVID-19 as the reason and the dates the LOA is in effect. Participants must be notified that the LOA will delay their program completion date.

2. If a DUI program has suspended all services, and is unable to provide staffing for response to email or phone inquiries from program participants, what should the program do?

The program should make every effort to maintain communication with program participants and the general public and communication, including:

- Ensure outgoing phone and email messages identify a contact number where someone can be reached
- Place signs at program facility entrances indicating the program is temporarily closed and provide a contact number where someone can be reached
- Provide program status updates to the county and the state

3. If a DUI program can continue to provide services using all protocols for social distancing, and a DUI participant has been diagnosed with or exhibiting signs of COVID-19, what action should be taken?

Staff should inform possible contacts of their possible exposure, but must protect and maintain the participant's confidentiality as required by law. Clients exposed to a person with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#) on how to address their potential exposure, as recommendations are evolving over time.

In this situation, it is appropriate for the DUI program to offer and approve a no-cost leave of absence (LOA) to the individual exhibiting signs of being ill. Additionally, it is appropriate for DUI programs to offer and approve a no-cost LOA to those who may not be ill, but are expressing concerns about attending program services relating to COVID-19. In both instances, a LOA granted for COVID-19 should:

- Be in written format and maintained in the participant's file. The documentation should identify COVID-19 as the reason and the dates the LOA is in effect. In this instance, a participant signature is not required.
- The duration of the blanket LOA will be dependent on COVID-19 developments and consistency with local level response to the outbreak.
- It is important to ensure the participant understands taking a LOA will delay their program completion date.

4. If DUI Programs are following the recommendation to suspend or limit program services due to the COVID-19 emergency, are DUI Programs able to conduct any program services by telehealth?

DHCS supports telehealth services for DUI Programs within state and federal requirements, given the importance of minimizing COVID-19 spread. See the [COVID-19 Behavioral Health Information Notice](#), the [DHCS telehealth website](#) and the [DHCS Telehealth FAQ](#).

5. What if a DUI program has suspended program services and a participant wants to enroll in the program? Can a program conduct an enrollment by telephone?

- Due to the complexity and importance of the enrollment process, program enrollments by phone will not be allowed. Programs can complete a pre-enrollment process by phone where the program obtains relevant information such as name, address, phone, email, DOB, driver license number, court docket, date of arrest, date of conviction.
- All individuals completing the pre-enrollment process including those with a court referral shall be provided with an appointment to complete the enrollment process 30 days in advance.

- Once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted by State government officials, programs should make every effort to contact all individuals who completed the pre-enrollment process to get them into the program as soon as possible. If COVID-19 continues to impact normal program operations, and the client's enrollment appointment is affected, the program should notify the individual for reschedule.

6. What guidance is DHCS providing to all local courts regarding potential enrollment and service delays in DUI Programs?

- DHCS is unable to contact each court to convey information regarding delayed DUI program enrollment and services due to the COVID-19. DHCS will work on providing communication generally explaining the impact of COVID-19 on DUI programs and the anticipated enrollment and service delays. Counties, DUI programs, and DUI participants can share the correspondence with courts and probation officers.
- DHCS encourages each county to contact courts to convey the impact of COVID-19 on DUI programs and participants within their jurisdiction.
- DHCS continues to explore options on communication with courts conveying when DUI program services resume regular operations. Additionally, DHCS will seek county cooperation to assist in conveying this information.

7. Because DUI programs report participant enrollment and completion data to the Department of Motor Vehicles, is the DMV aware of the impact the COVID-19 has on DUI program enrollment and services?

DHCS has conveyed to the DMV potential enrollment and service interruptions to varying degrees across the DUI system due to the COVID-19 statewide emergency. DMV is aware that data collection for the duration of the incident will potentially reflect a delay in the time it takes an individual to enroll into a DUI program following their conviction and an increase in the time it takes for a participant to complete mandated program requirements. DHCS will continue communication with the DMV throughout the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.

8. Is there anything else DHCS is doing to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 statewide emergency on DUI programs?

DHCS is committed to providing timely guidance in response to the evolving situation on our [COVID-19 response website](#). Individuals are encouraged to stay informed by visiting the federal [CDC](#) and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) websites. Both websites are updated daily with the latest information and advice for the public and small businesses impacted by COVID-19.