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POLICY AND PROCEDURE	
SUBJECT/TITLE:	CMH Home Visiting Protocol
Distributed to:	Nursing Employees
HEALTH COMMISSIONER	Michael E. Martin, M.D.
APPROVAL DATE:	6/16/2021
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REFERENCE NUMBER:	N-1

Children With Medical Handicaps Program (CMH) Home Visiting Protocol and COVID-19 Safety Precautions

Purpose: To standardize procedures for Public Health Nursing (PHN) staff home visiting with CMH clients and their families, and to outline safety procedures for prevention infectious diseases during home visits.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Ohio Department of Health issued guidance on 6-11-2021, encouraging resumption of PHN home visits for CMH clients and their families, given the significant decrease in COVID-19 case numbers. This document also outlined COVID-19 safety recommendations for home visits.
2. Both the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Scioto County Health Department (SCHD) strongly prefer in-person home visits, with the child present, as the best practice for CMH initial and annual update meetings with CMH clients and their parents/legal guardians. If an in-person home visit with the child present is not possible, the next preferred option is an in-person visit with the child present at the health department (or another safe public location in the community.) It is very important that the Public Health Nurse sees the child during the initial and annual update visits. (It is not necessary to see the child during visits to assist the parent in completing a financial application.)

II. PROCEDURES FOR SCHEDULING CMH HOME VISITS AND OTHER MEETINGS

1. When calling a parent or legal guardian (or client if age 18 or older) to schedule a CMH initial visit or annual update visit, **the PHN must make every effort to schedule an in-person meeting with the child present, ideally in the client's home.**
2. If the parent/legal guardian is concerned about an in-home visit due to the possibility of transmission of COVID-19, the PHN should describe the safety precautions we take (see Section III). Remind parents that managing physicians have gone back to in-person office visits, and CMH requires clients to see their managing physician in person at least once annually. Explain that CMH wants PHNs to see the child in person at least once annually as well. PHNs who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are encouraged to share their vaccination status with the parent/legal guardian. If the parent has a porch or a yard and the weather is nice, advise the parent that the meeting can take place on a porch or out in the yard if that would make the parent more comfortable.
3. If the parent/legal guardian is still unwilling to have a PHN visit the home, the next best option is an in-person visit with the parent and child in the Health Department office. Please explain to the

parent/legal guardian that it is important that you see the child in person, and that the meeting space in the health department is a private room that allows for 6 ft distancing.

4. If the parent refuses a home visit or a visit to the Health Dept. office with the child present, the next best option is an in-person visit in a safe community setting of the parent's choice, such as a public library, community center, etc.
5. Phone visits and in-person visits without the child present are to be discouraged, and only used as a last resort. Notify the nursing director if the parent/legal guardian is unwilling to attend an in-person visit with the child present. (Exception: If the child is immunocompromised and the parent/legal guardian does not want an in-person visit due to the child's immunocompromised status, the PHN may meet in-person with the parent only, or do a phone visit if necessary.)
6. The PHN will make at least 3 contact attempts for each visit. Try all available phone numbers. If it is not clear that the phone number and/or address is still valid, contact the CMH coordinator at the Managing Physician's office, the school nurse if applicable, and the local pediatrician to try to find current contact info. At least one contact attempt should be in writing, by letter.
7. When scheduling a home visit or meeting, the PHN will advise the parent/legal guardian to notify the PHN if anyone in the home is ill on the day of the home visit or meeting.
8. Per ODH, a family's decision not to receive a COVID-19 vaccine cannot be used to deny home visiting services.
9. The PHN will document all attempts to schedule a visit, with the parent/legal guardian's response (or non-response), in the written nurses' notes in the patient's chart.

III. COVID-19 SAFETY PROCEDURES BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER IN-PERSON CMH MEETINGS

1. The PHN will take his/her temperature and self-monitor for any symptoms of infectious disease (including COVID-19) before leaving for the visit. If the PHN's temperature is 99.5 or above, or if the PHN exhibits any symptoms of infectious disease including cough, diarrhea, etc., the PHN will inform the client and reschedule the visit until at least 24 hours after symptoms have ceased.
2. Until further notice, the PHN will wear a face mask during all in-person meetings with a client and/or family, even if the PHN has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
3. The PHN will sanitize hands before leaving the car to attend the meeting, and after returning to the car after the meeting.
4. The PHN should bring into the client's home only those items that are absolutely necessary: mask, plastic clipboard, pen, and any necessary forms.
5. The PHN should carry disinfecting wipes in the car, and sanitize any items touched by the client/parent (i.e., pens, clipboard) once the visit is over.
6. Avoid physical contact (shaking hands, hugs, holding babies, etc.) during the visit.
7. If possible, maintain the recommended 6 ft. distance between people during the visit.

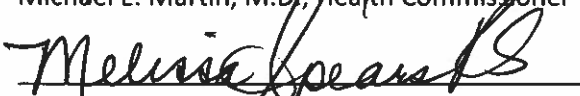
Reference:

Ohio Department of Health. Update on Guidance for In-Person, In-Home Visits 6.1.21. (attached)

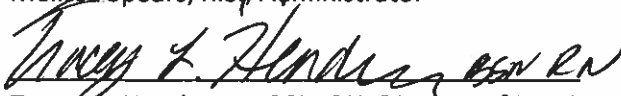
Approved by:


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date 6-23-2021


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Update on Guidance for In-Person, In-Home Visits 6.11.21

During the past year, you worked tirelessly to support families, learned new skills for virtual service delivery, and engaged in creative problem solving. Through your hard work, you have positively affected thousands of families during a difficult time for many.

The overwhelming majority of home visiting services, during this time, have been provided virtually. As agencies begin to plan to return to in-person home visiting by outlining safeguards against COVID-19 for the home visitors and families, please determine how your agency will transition to providing services in-person, if you have not already done so.

Each agency should manage their policies and practices for completing in-home, face to face visits based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance. Be aware of the spread in your community. Comply with local advisories when initiating or resuming in-home visits as appropriate.

As a best practice the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) encourages, but does not require, home visitors to utilize maximum safety precautions, regardless of vaccination status, when working with families. Safety precautions may include prescreening for both the home visitor and the families for symptoms of COVID-19 infection prior to the visit, maintaining social distancing when possible, hand washing and sanitizing, and use of masks/face coverings. This list is not exhaustive, and the CDC website should be referred to for home visiting guidance.

ODH will continue to support virtual home visits to allow maximum flexibility and comfort for home visitors and for families. Some families may not be comfortable with in-person interactions. Virtual home visits will remain a viable option if the agency or family receiving services determines that a virtual method is appropriate. A family's decision not to receive a COVID-19 vaccination cannot be used to deny home visiting services. When an in-home, face to face visit is not possible, outdoor visits can occur if appropriate and acceptable to the family.

Keep in mind that the CDC still reports that pregnant women are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Additionally, pregnant women with COVID-19 might be at increased risk for other adverse outcomes, such as preterm birth.

Thank you again for your work this past year to serve children and families. If you have any questions, please reach out to your CMH field nurse.

Guidance for Programs that Conduct Home Visits

("Home Visitor" refers to a person who provides program services to individuals/families in their homes.)

Prior to Visit:

- Call client/family and prescreen to determine if a home visit is appropriate.
- Check temperature before heading out.

What to Bring:

- Masks.
- Bring only items necessary for the visit into the home.
- Avoid placing belongings on tabletops and furniture that might have high levels of contamination.
- Store personal items securely in your vehicle prior to arriving at the location.

Arrival and Greeting:

- Put your face covering on after sanitizing hands and before leaving your vehicle.
- Greet families verbally.
- Avoid physical contact.
- If possible, maintain the recommended 6 feet distance between people.

Resources and Additional Information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home>