
Assuring Access to Telehealth, Remote or Telephonic Services and Remote Visits with Family and Friends for Individuals in Home and Community Based Services Waivers (Mi Via, DD, and Medically Fragile Waivers) during the Public Health Emergency

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Although not always directly required by program rules, providing access to the internet via hard wire or WIFI is a cost of doing business that supports the person's health and safety and enhances knowledge, performance and safety of Direct Support Personnel (DSP). These factors ultimately benefit the provider as well as the individual.

A variety of options are available to facilitate internet access for telehealth during the Public Health Emergency, as well as in normal times.

Case Managers and Consultants

If an individual does not have access to internet for telehealth, remote or telephonic services, or have remote access to family /friends, the case managers (DD and Medically Fragile Waivers) or Consultants (Mi Via) should work together with providers, family, employees, and the rest of the team to plan for internet access.

DD Waiver Residential Providers of Supported Living, Family Living and Intensive Medical Living Supports (IMLS)

Residential Providers for DD Waiver (Supported Living, IMLS or Family Living provider) have a responsibility to assure basic health and safety as well as implementation of the Individual Service Plan (ISP). Assuring a person has options for internet access is necessary during the Public Health Emergency in order to comply with DD Waiver standards. Standards require providers to¹:

- Assist individuals to attend medical appointments.
- Engage in training, monitoring and implementation activities (related to health care plans/CARMPs; positive behavior support plans; dietary plans, Medical Emergency Response Plans, and Written Direct Support Instructions).
- Have readily available access to assistive or personal support technology.
- Assist with social relationships.
- Have basic utilities.

DD Waiver residential providers must immediately initiate change to any internal practices or internal policies that cause barriers to internet access for the person in services and their

¹ LCA: 10.3.7 Scope of Living Supports page 98 and 97 of DD Waiver Service Standards and CIHS: 10.4.1 page 113 and 114

support staff. Changes must be completed no later than July 1, 2020. The DD Waiver Service Standards will list internet as a basic utility with the next issue.

It is the expectation of DOH/ DDS that responsible residential providers:

1. Provide technical assistance to DSP to facilitate the person's use of the internet and apps necessary for DD Waiver case managers, nurses, registered dietitians, therapists, and behavior support consultants, and trainers to provider services. This will ensure that telehealth, remote monitoring, and/ or family/friend contact on various platforms or using various devices is supported for each person in service.
2. Ensure DSP have access to the technology, data, and internet needed to support people with increased volume of telephonic/telehealth consultation and training during the Public Health Emergency.
3. Inform waiver services providers about how their agencies are making internet available to individuals, what remote platforms are being used and how their agencies are assuring DSP competence in the technology, so that accessible audio and video links for waiver service providers and social connections is simple.
4. Identify processes to assist with meeting the telehealth/telephonic allowances and requirements for services during the Public Health Emergency and afterward as needed.
5. Examine rental and utility agreements to assure that cost sharing for internet is fair and equitable
 - ✓ Providers may not use internet that is exclusively paid for by people in their services.
 - ✓ Providers may build fair and equitable cost sharing into rental and utility agreements.
6. Contact their DDS Regional Office if challenged by local resources and access.

Low Cost Resources for Internet and Video Communication

1. Use of a JetPack as a mobile hotspot
<https://www.verizonwireless.com/support/verizon-jetpack-faq/>
2. Video Cameras on top of monitor for increased video communication
https://www.google.com/search?q=video+cameras+for+computers&rlz=1C1GCEU_enUS824US824&oq=videocameras+&aqs=chrome.5.69i57j0l7.8849j0i8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8
3. Comcast Internet Essentials [1-855-8-INTERNET \(1-855-846-8376\)](tel:1-855-8-INTERNET).
Call Center hours of operation are from 8 AM to Midnight (EST), seven days a week.
4. Lifeline, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program to help make communication services more affordable for eligible consumers.
<https://www.lifelinesupport.org/>