

HFNY HOME VISITING UPDATES

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and federal Public Health Emergency, HFNY allowed for the use of virtual video visits on interactive platforms and virtual telephone-only visits so we could continue to serve families when in-person meetings were restricted. The Department of Health and Human Services is planning to lift the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023. As we approach the end of the PHE, Central Administration has been evaluating the changes made in response to Covid-19 to determine what our “new normal” will look like at HFNY.

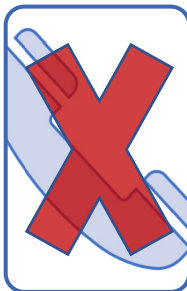
WHAT'S CHANGING

(Effective July 1, 2023)



MINIMUM HOME VISIT THRESHOLD WILL BE 30 MINS

In response to Covid-19, the 30-minute minimum for home visits was suspended. This minimum visit length will be reinstated on July 1, 2023. As of this date, visits less than 30 minutes will not be able to be entered in the MIS as home visits; they can be entered as attempted visits or in case notes.



PHONE VISITS WILL NO LONGER COUNT AS HOME VISITS

While the Public Health Emergency is expected to end on May 11, 2023, HFNY is extending phone visits until June 30, 2023. This will allow programs time to transition away from phone visits and provide support to staff and families as programs focus on providing services virtually and in-person. As of July 1, 2023, staff will not be able to select “Virtual Visit (telephone only)” as a visit type in the MIS. Phone contacts can be entered as case notes.

OUR RATIONALE

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Phone-only (no video) visits do not achieve the level of services we expect from a home visiting program. Analyses of MIS data show that there are some essential elements of home visits that do not happen, or that happen in a very limited way (e.g. CHEERS), because the worker cannot see the family and the home environment during a phone-only visit. Conversations with program staff indicate that it is difficult to observe parent-child interaction and to model behaviors for families where there is no visual component.

FAQS

1. **Can I keep offering virtual/video visits to families?** Yes! HFNY will still allow virtual video visits on interactive platforms (e.g., Zoom, WhatsApp, FaceTime). Please review policy 4-2B for more information about when conducting virtual visits using interactive platforms is appropriate.
2. **What is considered a phone visit and what is a virtual visit?** The visit type is determined by whether there is video contact or only audio, regardless of the device used (e.g., a computer/laptop, tablet/iPad, or a smartphone with video capabilities). A virtual visit has to include video. A phone visit is audio only (and includes no video) regardless of the platform used.
3. **What if I cannot conduct an in-person visit because of sickness or weather conditions and video visits are not possible?** You can still contact the family over the phone, but that contact will be recorded in case notes and not as a home visit log; it will not count as a home visit.
4. **What if families want to drop out because we cannot do phone visits?** It is understandable that some families may not be comfortable with virtual or in person visits. However, HFNY is a home visiting program; the data show that in-person or virtual video visits using interactive platforms are key to effective delivery of services. We hope that programs can use the next two months to transition families to in-home and virtual/video visits. Unfortunately, some families may nevertheless choose to disengage from the program.
5. **What if caregivers record themselves interacting with their child?** Caregivers may still do this to supplement visits conducted virtually or in-person. However, a phone-only visit where a caregiver subsequently shares a video will no longer be counted as a home visit.