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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.