

# Independent Living Services & Supported Living Services

## Frequently Asked Questions

3/18/2020

1. Question: What is considered an essential service?

Answer: Essential services are those which support an individual to live successfully in the community and will support their health and safety. There is a great deal of variation in what is classified as essential. For ILS, essential services may include grocery shopping, laundry, medical appointments, etc. For Supported Living Services, essential services may also include care and supervision. These classifications have to do with the intent of the service rather than where the consumer lives. SARC feels confident the provider can determine what is essential and what is non-essential. This may require a conversation with the individual and the family.

2. Question: What providers can receive N95 masks from SARC?

Answer: SARC was provided with a limited number of N95 masks from DDS. Service providers may request masks when serving an individual who is directed to self-quarantine due to exposure. The primary focus will be on supporting Intermediate Care Facilities and Adult Residential Facilities for Persons with Special Healthcare Needs. Masks should not be worn by individuals and staff who are healthy. To request a mask, please email the request to [soe@sarc.org](mailto:soe@sarc.org) with pertinent information such as the name of the individual served and the number of masks needed to support the individual. SARC expects that programs will follow Center for Disease Control (CDC) directives related to mask usage.

3. Question: What activities can be performed outside of the home?

Answer: Community outings may be important for the health and safety needs of the individual. We ask that you follow the Shelter in Place order for limited outings and social distancing. For more specific information related to each county, please go here: [Shelter in Place](#).

4. Question: Can ILS providers have regular sessions over the phone or via video?

Answer: DDS issued a directive indicating which services may provide remote support. ILS and SLS are included on the list of services. Please review the DDS Directive on Requirements Waived [here](#).

### Staff and Staffing Questions:

5. Question: How should ILS and SLS providers prepare staff:

Answer: Provider staff should take all steps on the CDC checklist [here](#), including asking family members if they are experiencing symptoms, such as fever and persistent cough. Providers should develop a plan of support for each client and a contingency plan in the event staff are not able to attend to critical services.

6. Question: If a service provider is temporarily employing a staff that works for another service provider which has a closed program, can the fingerprinting requirements be waived?

Answer: At this time, SARC does not have the authority to waive that kind of requirement.

7. Question: How can staff adhere to social distancing when meeting personal care and other needs of the individual?

Answer: Staff should use the maximum flexibility to meet the individual's needs. We encourage service providers to use their best judgment and to follow universal precautions. Learn more here: [CDC caring for someone at home](#).

8. Question: Can SARC provide a badge or other document for service provider staff to verify they are providing essential services when they are in the community?

Answer: No, SARC cannot issue badges to providers for their staff. For staff who are concerned about being stopped in the community (whether during travel to and from their work site or on essential community outings with individuals), service providers may want to draft a letter on their agency's letterhead with the staff's name and the classification of their essential business and essential services.

#### **Documentation Questions:**

9. Question: What information do service providers need to send to SARC to ensure they will be able to bill for absences, essential services, and non-essential services?

Answer: For services that are or may be considered essential, SARC is requesting:

- A list of the individuals the service provider is currently serving
- A contingency plan for any staffing issues that may arise

For services that are not considered essential and will be temporarily suspended, SARC will fund these services for individuals following the Shelter in Place orders if providers submit the requested documentation. Service providers must provide SARC:

- A copy of the letter sent to individuals and families
- A list of the individuals currently served

11. Question: What should be included in the client list I send to SARC?

Answer: Please include the individual's name, UCI number, service type, and whether the individual is receiving essential services or non-essential services. If you have already sent the list of clients, we will work with the list you have sent. Please send this information to [soe@sarc.org](mailto:soe@sarc.org).

12. Question: What documentation does a service provider submit to SARC if requesting additional staffing?

Answer: SARC is requesting a justification of the need and a staffing schedule. Please work with your SARC Service Coordinator

13. Question: Should providers update SARC if the list of individuals receiving essential services changes?

Answer: Yes, please update the SARC Service Coordinator if there are changes in the individuals that you are supporting.

#### **Billing Questions:**

14. Question: Will providers be able to bill if they determine that an individual's services are non-essential?

Answer: If you have determined that an individual's services are non-essential, you will be able to bill for missed hours in relation to COVID-19 if the absence is greater than the average number of missed days in a 12 month period. Please be sure to maintain documentation during this time, which would include a list of individuals that are affected and the hours that are missed.

15. Question: Will service providers be able to bill for absences in relation to COVID-19?

Answer: Service providers should track all absences due to COVID-19 whether it is prior to the Shelter in Place order or following the order. Providers will be required to provide documentation so it is important that documentation reflects that an absence was in relation to COVID-19. Absences can be billed only if the number of absences is greater than the average number of missed days in a 12 month period.

16. Question: What is the procedure for e-billing?

Answer: Please reference *the [Letter to Service Providers – State of Emergency](#)* on our website. Service providers should document the individual they are referencing, shifts that were missed, and indicate it is related to COVID-19. Service providers should add a comment in the e-billing system as instructed on the aforementioned *Letter to Service Providers*.

17. Question: Is there a date from which service providers are able to start billing for absences and non-essential services?

Answer: Absences from an open program related to COVID-19 can be billed for beginning March 4, 2020, the date of the Governor's State of Emergency declaration, only if the absence was related to COVID-19 and greater than the average absence over the past 12 months. Non-essential services can be billed for beginning March 17 for Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties and March 18 for Monterey and San Benito Counties.