



IDEAS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPECIALIZED DOCKET RESPONSES TO COVID-19

*Please note: These considerations are supplemental to Supreme Court of Ohio
and local judicial and public health guidance.*

PRECAUTIONS

- Maintain appropriate social distance and follow all CDC and Ohio Department of Health recommendations.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>
- <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/home>
- Provide COVID-19 information to participants in a reassuring manner that does not contribute to panic.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- Consult with your local leaders and experts (health department, law enforcement, treatment, children services, medical, etc.) and create and implement a plan that responds to your community's risks and needs.
- Inform participants of your plans to ensure safety while continuing program operations or to potentially suspend, abbreviate, or otherwise modify services (at least let them know your plans to have a plan).
 - Keep in mind that pandemics may result in a peak absenteeism rates of 25-40% due to illness or provision of care to family and friends – this may impact many of the professional services available to participants.
- Acknowledge that participants (and their children) are likely experiencing varying responses to the pandemic information on the

news and social media (such as fear, anxiety, etc.). The link below offers several resources:

- <https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/pandemics>
- Recognize that childcare will likely be an increasing issue for both participants and team members as schools will be closed for at least a few weeks.

PARTICIPANT MONITORING

- Confirm contact information (especially phone numbers) with all participants.
- Confirm that participants have your contact information in their phones and remind/reaffirm that they must contact you if they are sick or need to miss a scheduled program activity.
- Suspend field visits or limit them to “curbside” contact with appropriate social distancing. Transition supervision contacts and monitoring to technology platforms or phone.
 - Check in by phone and/or text with participants on a regular basis (you may consider varying the frequency depending on phase, or check in on everyone daily knowing they may be sick).
 - Also, keep in mind that the family dynamic may be different with schools closed and family members home who would otherwise be engaged in other activities. It might be beneficial to ask how they are doing.

TREATMENT SERVICES AND RECOVERY SUPPORTS

- Provide participants with a resource list of on-line recovery supports and meetings.
- Consult directly with treatment and other service providers (such as drug testing providers, etc.) who work with your participants so you know if they are modifying or restricting services.
- Consult with treatment providers to assess their capacity for service with court participants and discuss collaborative contact coverage.
- Suspension or modification of treatment services should be a decision directed by treatment professionals.
- Use telehealth for services.

DRUG TESTING

- Drug testing is something that is monitored for compliance, but it is also a medical intervention. The national guidance on drug testing was informed in part by medical studies and medical input. Therefore, consulting with treatment providers should be considered.
- The best practice standards emphasize drug testing should be the last thing reduced as other treatment measures change. Courts should work with providers and consider alternative methods of testing and accountability.

TREATMENT TEAM AND STATUS HEARINGS

- Continue standard operations, but be prepared to cancel meetings or at least encourage the use of conference calls or videoconferencing in place of face-to-face meetings.
- If any of the professional staff / multidisciplinary team are sick, ask that they not attend staffing or court in person – they could call in or not attend at all.

- Do not convene more than 10 individuals in any one location at one time.
- If warranted, conduct staffing via video or phone weekly and reduce court to every other week or once per month (*If your team determines a need to suspend court contact for a month, please ensure the team has a strategy for ongoing support to your participants*).
- Comply with all constitutional and statutory rights of docket participants.

WORKFORCE CONSIDERATIONS

- If, at some point, you have a reason or mandate to work from home, remember to **follow all appropriate confidentiality safeguards** for participant information on your computer, thumb drives, etc.
- This might be a good opportunity to review and revise your policies, procedures, participant handbook, MOUs, forms, and other operational documents that you so rarely have time to address.