



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES**  
*A Healthcare Service Agency*

NED LAMONT  
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON, Ph.D.  
COMMISSIONER

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** DMHAS Private Non-Profit Providers  
**From:** Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.  
**Date:** April 2, 2020  
**Subject:** DMHAS COVID-19 Provider Update #9

As we continue to respond as a system of care, I'd like to share with you information to help you and the people you serve during this very challenging time:

*Governor Lamont Announces Creation of 4-Ct Charitable Organization Uniting Donors with Connecticut Programs Responding to COVID-19: 4-CT Will Raise New Funds to Support the State's Nonprofit Providers Serving Those with the Greatest Need*

Recognizing the considerable demand on resources the COVID-19 public health emergency is having on nearly every aspect of life across the state, a group of Connecticut-based philanthropists today announced that they have established a charitable organization to raise new support for the state's nonprofit organizations that are serving those impacted by the pandemic. The [Connecticut COVID-19 Charity Connection](#) – also known as 4-CT – is an independent, 501(c)3 organization with the mission of bolstering the resources available to support the state's frontline providers who are serving all areas impacted by the crisis. 4-CT will provide financial support to ensure their services can meet increased demand and have a positive impact. In announcing its launch, the charity has already raised \$10 million from generous donors and is seeking to significantly increase these efforts in the coming weeks and months to further support to the state's nonprofit community.

*Use of Telephone Evaluations to Initiate Buprenorphine Prescribing*

On March 31, the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) announced that it is allowing DATA-waived medical practitioners in office based settings to prescribe buprenorphine to new patients with opioid use disorders following a telephone evaluation rather than conducting an examination of the patient in person or via telemedicine. This additional flexibility is in effect from March 31, 2020, until the public health emergency declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services ends, unless DEA specifies an earlier date. This flexibility does not apply to the prescribing or dispensing of methadone to new patients. Methadone clinics are, however, free to dispense (not prescribe) buprenorphine to new patients with opioid use disorders for

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maintenance treatment or detoxification treatment following an evaluation via telephone voice calls.

In either scenario, this may only be done if the evaluating practitioner determines that an adequate evaluation of the patient can be accomplished via the use of a telephone. The prescription also must otherwise be consistent with the practitioner's aforementioned obligation under DEA regulations to only prescribe controlled substances for a legitimate medical purpose while acting in the usual course of professional practice. For information, go to [https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/GDP/\(DEA-DC-022\)\(DEA068\)%20DEA%20SAMHSA%20buprenorphine%20telemedicine%20%20\(Final\)%20+Esign.pdf](https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/GDP/(DEA-DC-022)(DEA068)%20DEA%20SAMHSA%20buprenorphine%20telemedicine%20%20(Final)%20+Esign.pdf).

#### *SafeLink Provides Unlimited Talk and Text for the Month of April*

The DSS vendor of Medicaid-issued cell phones, SafeLink, has alerted all phone holders that they will be providing, free of charge, unlimited talking and texting for each of the months of March and April. Written communication was sent to all HUSKY phone members and the following text message was sent to all SafeLink customers regarding unlimited talk and text for April:

SafeLink: Supporting you during COVID-19 with Unlimited Talk and Text for the month of April

#### *Messaging to Clients*

As behavioral health providers, our clients and community seek our services, guidance and support, especially during stressful times of uncertainties. During this unprecedented time, our messaging to our clients and community is even more important. As you make changes within your agencies and programs, be cognizant that you continue to instill hope to your clients and community. It is important to communicate a message that informs them, that while the way you deliver services might have changed, you stay committed to your mission. A word like "closed" is very frightening to the persons and community we serve. Let them know that you are open for business and the way you do business might change, so you can continue to meet their needs. Below is an example of how one provider is doing just that. Many thanks to your dedication to the persons we serve.

- <https://www.mccallcenterct.org/>

It's important that we not only continue to provide support to the people we serve, but to each other as well. I also ask that you take the time to practice self-care so that you can continue to do the essential work you do and be there for your loved ones. Here is some information from NAMI on things you can do to help take care of yourself: <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers/Taking-Care-of-Yourself>

As we begin to see an increase in COVID-19 cases in our communities, I've attached information that I thought would be helpful to you regarding your risk for exposure and transmission of COVID-19.