



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

SUSAN G. OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for Human Services

May 10, 2023

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Attention: Directors, Child Welfare Program Administrators/Managers, and Supervisors

Subject: Ending of COVID-19 Waiver allowing Virtual Visits for Monthly Foster Care Visits

REQUIRED ACTION: Information Only Time Sensitive Immediate

On January 27, 2020, The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared a public health emergency in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. A declaration of a State of Emergency followed for North Carolina on March 10, 2020, and a National Emergency was declared on March 13, 2020. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) issued a letter on April 15, 2020 addressing the requirements of Section 424(f)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act that requires each state must ensure that not less than 50 percent of the total number of monthly caseworker visits during a federal fiscal year occur in the residence of the child. This letter gave states the flexibility to include monthly caseworker visits that occurred by means of videoconferencing to count as "in the child's residence." In response, on May 1, 2020, the North Carolina Department of Social Services (NCDSS) issued guidance that caseworker visits during the COVID-19 pandemic take place using videoconferencing or similar form of technology unless, for any reason, a child's safety could not be assured.

On August 15, 2022, Governor Roy Cooper issued an Executive Order Terminating the COVID-19 State of Emergency. The HHS Secretary renewed their COVID-19 declaration on February 9, 2023, for a 90-day period and announced HHS's plan for the declaration to expire on May 11, 2023. ACF has issued a letter determining that this flexibility will remain available through June 30, 2022.

Beginning July 1, 2023, all case worker visits between the child and the social worker must take place in person.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your Regional Child Welfare Consultant.

Sincerely,

Peter L. West

Peter L. West, ThM.

Section Chief for County Operations

Division of Social Services

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Cc: Susan Osborne, Assistant Secretary for Human Services
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Adrian Daye, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice
Tammy Shook, Interim Deputy Director for County Operations/Regulatory & Licensing
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Safety and Prevention Services
Kimaree Sanders, Interim Section Chief for Regulatory & Licensing
Carla McNeill, Section Chief for Permanency Planning

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