

**MRC 2020 COVID-19**

**Consumer Remote Access Survey**

**Executive Summary**

**July 2020**

**Background and Methodology**

As part of the Massachusetts COVID-19 State of Emergency response efforts, MRC administered the COVID-19 Consumer Remote Access Survey to collect feedback from consumers with current, active cases to assess their satisfaction related to how MRC is presently meeting their needs as it relates to service delivery.

The survey is meant to assist the agency in gauging the impact of COVID-19 related to accessing MRC services from both the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Community Living (CL) Divisions. To allow for full participation in this survey, the MRC utilized both an online survey and telephone data-collection approach. This allowed for consumers with and without emails to participate in the survey. The survey was translated into the most common languages spoken by our consumers (Khmer, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole).

Data from the MRC Information System (MRCIS) and the Community Living database were linked to survey responses to compare the demographic correlation through email and telephone responses. Consumer comments to open-ended questions were analyzed using qualitative methods. The Analytics and Quality Assurance (AQA) department refers any survey respondents who express any serious problems or concerns through the consumer remote access survey to the MRC Ombudsman’s office. There were no such instances that occurred in the COVID-19 Remote Access Survey.

The survey was sent to 11,742 active consumers in which, there were some instances where the survey was sent to nonfunctional email addresses, individuals who opted out of participating in the survey, or individuals who did not open the survey. The final sample size was 1,367 (or 12% of total survey invitations sent out). In total, the survey received 861 responses achieving statistical validity at a confidence level of 95% with a 5% margin of error. The findings in this report shows data from the survey that was distributed in June 2020. The findings from this survey will also assist MRC in enhancing its current service delivery methods based on consumer feedback and experience during this global health pandemic.

**Overall Survey Results**

1. **Please select the MRC Division you work with.**

Approximately 93% of respondents were VR consumers and 6% were CL consumers. An exceedingly small number of respondents (1%) were unsure of which division they currently received MRC services from but still participated in the overall survey.

1. **Have you been able to receive your services virtually such a ZOOM calls, video chats, phone calls etc. while MRC staff are working remotely?**

A vast majority (62%) of respondents, indicated they were receiving all their usual MRC services remotely which consist of teleconferencing tools such as ZOOM, FaceTime, email and/or text. About 14% of consumers indicated that they were receiving some of their services remotely, with the remaining respondents (24%) being unable to receive their usual MRC services at this time.

Upon further analysis, it was revealed that some of the services are not services available virtually due to COVID-19. These services include home care services such as housekeeping, home maker assistance and adult companion services. Other reasons included consumers not being able to reach their counselors, consumers who were waiting to receive services Pre-COVID, consumers not interested at services at this time, or consumers being unable to access ZOOM or other teleconferencing methods among other reasons.

1. **How satisfied are you with the MRC services you are receiving remotely, during the Massachusetts COVID-19 State of Emergency?**

Overall, 85% of all survey respondents were satisfied with MRC services they were receiving remotely during the Massachusetts COVID-19 State of Emergency. Of these, an exceedingly high number of respondents (42%) indicated they were “Very Satisfied” with MRC services.

1. **How important is it for you to "see" your MRC staff person when you meet (for example, using Zoom, Facetime, Webex, or some other video chat tool) where you can talk and see each other at the same time?**

58% answered that is was important for them to “see” their MRC staff person when they meet using tools such as but not limited to ZOOM, Facetime, WebEx etc, followed by 21% suggesting it was not important, and 22% of survey respondents who have never used a video chat tool with their MRC staff person.

1. **Do you think platforms like Zoom, Facebook, Webex or other video chat tools could take the place of meeting your MRC staff in person even once our physical offices reopen?**

MRC also surveyed consumers on the feasibility of using platforms such as ZOOM, Facebook, or WebEx to take the place of meeting their MRC staff in person even when MRC offices re-open. The survey analysis showed that a majority of respondents (54%) would prefer having a mix of in person and video meetings with their MRC staff person , while 25% indicated they would not like their meetings to be only through video chat, and 21% would prefer having their MRC meetings with staff only through video chat tools.

1. **Has your satisfaction with MRC services changed because of services being delivered remotely?**

When asked if consumer’s satisfaction with receiving MRC services remotely has changed, many respondents (81%) indicated that their satisfaction with MRC has not changed while 19% of respondents indicated that their level satisfaction with MRC had changed.

1. **Are there any gaps or challenges (for example, lack of technology, limited internet access, inability to use video chat tools) that make it difficult for you to receive MRC services remotely during the Massachusetts COVID-19 State of Emergency?**

On average, 82% of consumers selected "No" that they are not experiencing any gaps or challenges related to lack of technology, limited internet access, inability to use video chat tools that make it difficult to receive MRC services remotely while the remaining survey respondents, indicated that they were having difficulty.

**Survey Recommendations:**

Overall, MRC consumers are satisfied using teleconferencing and electronic communication methods to allow them to continue to receive their services. As it relates to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), most of the services are and can be available more readily in comparison to Community Living (CL) services. The reason being the MRC CL division provides services such as homecare assistance, independent and supported living services. As such, these require staff, providers, and personal care assistants (PCAs) to be present at an individual’s home to provide those services. Additionally, there were consumers, both from the VR and CL divisions, who indicated that they were uncomfortable with having some of their in-person services provided due to COVID-19.

It is recommended that MRC continue to maintain continuity of service delivery with the use of remote access to services especially for those who are medically or socially vulnerable or who do not have readily access to their regular MRC services. Remote access can also assist in preserving the consumer-staff relationship at times when an in-person visit is not practical or feasible.

MRC should also promote and optimize the use of teleconferencing services for the safety of consumers and staff and to best determine when in-person meetings are appropriate as more COVID-19 related guidance is provided from the Commonwealth. Lastly, MRC should investigate providing outreach or provision of resources to enable consumers with limited technology and connectivity and also offer flexibility in platforms that can be used for video consultation, or non-video options, when possible, especially for consumers receiving MRC CL services that require face to face interactions.