

## **OQE Guidance**

As a result of the State of Emergency, and various Orders issued by the Governor, on or about March 16, 2020, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) suspended its on-site licensing surveys. Any licenses in good standing set to expire during this period were extended. While there have been some Office of Quality Enhancement (OQE) activities, such as site feasibilities and preplacement approvals, that have continued remotely, the business of conducting on site licensure and certification surveys (main cycle, follow-up, and mid-cycle) has been suspended.

We are now discussing how to resume survey activities in the short and long term and hope to bring the ideas to ADDP and other stakeholders soon. OQE recognizes that providers, especially providers with a “past-due” survey or an upcoming survey, have a lot of questions. As of right now, DDS is still developing the answers, but here are the broad outlines of our proposed strategy.

Once DDS has determined that on site licensure surveys will resume, OQE will begin notifying those providers with past-due surveys of the date of the upcoming survey. OQE is planning to return to in-person, on-site visits, and does not envision redesigning the survey process to be a fully virtual process when it resumes. However, OQE will be proposing to do some pieces of the process remotely. For example, we have discussed conducting orientations with provider staff via Webex. Additionally, there will be some components of the survey process that may be done differently or remotely, such as documentation review. Once surveying resumes, OQE will provide notification in accordance with current practices (e.g. 45 days notice for main cycle surveys).

OQE also recognizes that certain indicators it assesses may be impacted by the COVID-19 emergency, so we are developing a guidance document outlining how each of the indicators will be reviewed for the COVID-19 period, and will share this with providers. For example, some indicators such as community involvement may not be reviewed for the period following the state of emergency in late March 2020. When conducting the survey, surveyors would review the support given to individuals to engage in community activities prior to the State of Emergency, and then after the State of Emergency was lifted, but not during the “stay at home” time interval. Other indicators are “point in time indicators” and our review would not change. For example, all Emergency Fact Sheets need to be accurate and complete at the point in time when we are there to survey.