



## OPERATIONAL MEMO

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<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>OPTIONS COUNSELING AGENCY GUIDANCE FOR OPTIONS COUNSELING ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC; IN-PERSON MEETINGS</b>
<b>SUPERSEDES NUMBER:</b>	<b>HCPF OM 20-054</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 7, 2021</b>
<b>DIVISION AND OFFICE:</b>	<b>CASE MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY PERFORMANCE DIVISION, OFFICE OF COMMUNITY LIVING</b>
<b>PROGRAM AREA:</b>	<b>OPTIONS COUNSELING</b>
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<b>APPROVED BY: BONNIE SILVA</b>	

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*HCPF Memo Series can be accessed online: <https://www.colorado.gov/hcpf/memo-series>*

### **Purpose and Audience:**

The purpose of this Operational Memo is to inform options counseling contractors of modifications to the temporary changes to options counseling activities for in-person member contacts. These changes are specific to contracted options counseling agencies.

### **Information:**

Effective March 12, 2020, all options counselors were instructed to perform all options counseling visits by telephone or another electronic modality.

### **Updated Guidance Effective November 3, 2021**

Options Counselors will have the option to offer in-person contact to all members who reside in a facility setting.



The options counseling agency must have an internal policy for implementation of in-person visits prior to their commencement. The policy must follow [Public Health Executive Orders](#) and Local Public Health Orders. The policy must include the following:

1. To protect the health and safety of our members, the Options Counselor must be fully vaccinated to complete in-person member contact.
  - a. A person is considered [fully vaccinated](#) for COVID-19 if more than 2 weeks have passed since the person received the second dose in a 2-dose series or if more than 2 weeks have passed since the person received a single-dose vaccine.
2. COVID-19 precautions are in place and being followed, as outlined by the [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#) at the time of the visit and the Local Public Health Agency.
3. The Options Counseling Agency must provide Personal Protective Equipment to the Options Counselor and maintain a symptom attestation log for Options Counselors to complete prior to in-person member contact.
4. The Options Counselor must be fever-free, symptom-free, and have no known exposure to COVID-19 prior to having any in-person contact with members.
5. The Options Counseling Agency must maintain a log of all in-person options counseling visits and member interaction to allow for contact tracing.
6. Options Counselors are to limit their in-person contact to no more than three members per day.
7. The Options Counselor should consider community spread when conducting visits. Using the CDPHE one-week average positivity rate, Options Counselor should not travel across counties or areas that have high community spread.
8. In-person contact must be at the request of the member or the nursing facility.
  - o The member must be provided information about the risks of in-person contact by the Options Counselor or the facility staff and, when applicable, the member's guardian and document the member or the facility's choice of contact modality.
    - Risks of in-person contact include potential exposure and/or risk of contracting of COVID-19.
    - Resources for Options Counselors when discussing potential risks related to COVID-19:
      - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>
      - [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fgroups-at-higher-risk.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fgroups-at-higher-risk.html)



- The Options Counselors must discuss with the member where the in-person visit will take place, who will be present and the precaution activities that are to be agreed upon.
  - When possible, meet in an outdoor setting,
  - Follow all State and Local requirements, and/or requests to wear a surgical mask covering the nose and mouth,
  - Allow for six feet of social distancing space,
  - When indoors, interaction should be performed in a well-ventilated area,
  - Limit duration of contact to minimum amount of time needed,
  - Options Counselors are to wash or sanitize their hands before and after in-person contact, and
  - For members who reside in a shared residential or a facility setting, the in-person contact must follow all Public Health Executive Orders, Local Public Health Orders and business requirements.
- Options Counselors are to track their temperatures prior to in-person contact and report any COVID related symptoms or concerns to their supervisor.
  - If an Options Counselors or a person residing in their home tests positive for COVID-19, the member should be notified and the Options Counselor shall not perform in-person visits until they have completed isolation for 10 days, with at least the last three (3) days without symptoms.

**In-person options counseling functions may only be performed when the conditions outlined above have been fully met.**

**Options counseling completed by telephone, or another electronic modality will continue to follow the process identified below:**

- **Member Signatures:** Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency the Department is accepting digital, physical, and verbal signatures on options counseling forms. For verbal signatures, the options counselor will document the verbal consent given in place of a physical signature in the documentation submitted to the Department. The options counselor will indicate "verbal consent given by" and the individual's name on the appropriate signature line.

Additional resources regarding precautions are available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>



**Attachment(s):**

None.

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