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October 6, 2020

Dear Early Intervention Provider,

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Division of Family and Child Health, Bureau of Early Intervention (BEI) continues its commitment to families and the provider community during the progression of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As you may know, Mayor De Blasio submitted a plan to Governor Cuomo to control the spread of COVID-19 in the nine Brooklyn and Queens zip codes listed in the table below with positivity rates above the 3% threshold. On Monday, October 5, 2020 Governor Cuomo announced that all schools in those nine zip codes will transition to fully remote teaching and learning beginning today, Tuesday, October 6, 2020.

To further control the increasing COVID-19 infection rates, beginning Wednesday, October 7, 2020, all Early Intervention service coordination, evaluation, and services authorized for children living in these nine zip codes can ONLY be provided via teletherapy. Please note that while the Early Intervention Program is considered an essential service, under the Governor’s executive order, it must comply with local and State mandates to control COVID-19 infection rates. Providing service via teletherapy will protect Early Intervention therapists, and the families and children whom we serve. The nine zip codes are:

Borough	ZIP	Neighborhood	Prior Day Test Positivity	Consecutive Days over 3%
Brooklyn	11204	Bensonhurst/Mapleton	6.47%	7+
	11210	Flatlands/Midwood	6.14%	7+
	11223	Gravesend/Homecrest	8.05%	7+
	11230	Midwood	7.28%	7+
	11219	Borough Park	8.36%	7+
	11229	Gerritsen Beach/Homecrest/Sheepshead Bay	4.69%	7+
Queens	11367	Kew Gardens Hills/Pomonok	4.34%	7+
	11415	Kew Gardens	3.63%	7+
	11691	Edgemere/Far Rockaway	5.89%	7+

In accordance with New York State Department of Health (SDOH), Division of Family and Child Health, Bureau of Early Intervention (BEI), COVID-19 Guidance issued on March 18, 2020, reimbursement is available for individual teletherapy Early Intervention services provided in accordance with the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and for authorized evaluations. Furthermore, in accordance with the guidance issued by SDOH BEI titled: [Providing Early Intervention Teletherapy Services without a Visual Component During the COVID-19 Declared State of Emergency](#), while the preferred method of teletherapy includes both audio and visual components, in some circumstances, services may be provided without a video component. If a family does not have access to the internet for cultural or religious reasons or does not have access to necessary hardware or software, early intervention services may be provided using a telephone-only method. Furthermore, Early Intervention providers may bill for service sessions delivered using the telephone-only method as long as service coordination notes document the reason(s) early intervention visits cannot be accomplished via standard teletherapy, and visits conducted telephonically are documented in both service delivery logs and session notes.

When changing the service delivery method from in-person services to teletherapy with or without a video component, Early Intervention providers must adhere to guidance issued by NYC BEI and attached to this communication, titled: **NYCBEI Complete COVID-19 Guidance (updated 4/22/2020)**.

- Specifically, Service Coordinators must:
 - Contact each family on their caseload residing in the zip codes identified in this document to explain the upcoming teletherapy requirement
 - Ensure that the child has a current [Consent for the Use of Telehealth During the COVID-19 Declared State of Emergency](#) attached to the child's integrated case in NYEIS.
- All Early Intervention service providers should review the document titled: Documenting Family Decisions to Suspend Services or the Early Intervention Process Due to COVID-19 Concerns (3/11/2020) in the attached PDF.
- All amendment requests are also subject to the amendment requirements outlined in the attached PDF. However, the Bureau is not expecting to receive many amendment requests since no amendment is required to change from home/community-based services to telehealth OR individual facility-based services to telehealth.

The DOHMH BEI will provide notification when in person services in these nine Brooklyn and Queens zip codes can resume.

Please direct any questions regarding this guidance to EITA@health.nyc.gov.

As always, thank you for your continued work on behalf of New York City's youngest children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lidiya Lednyak".

Lidiya Lednyak, MA, PMP

- c. Daniel H. Stephens, MD, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Family and Child Health,
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Constance L. Donohue, Director, New York State Department of Health,
Bureau of Early Intervention