

Policy Title: DHS COVID-19 Out of State and International Work-Related Travel

Applies To: Department of Human Services (“DHS”) and Community Umbrella Agency (“CUA”) staff

OVERVIEW:

This document provides an overview of the current policy and procedure regarding work-related travel out-of-state and internationally on behalf of the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (“DHS”). Such travel is necessary to remain in compliance with state law and regulation governing performance of duties, including conducting safety visits of out-of-home placements.

All essential work-related travel shall be done using the sound guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), the Pennsylvania Department of Health (“DOH”), and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (“PDPH”), along with all international travel being done in compliance with the United States Department of State health advisories.

POLICY

Policy Statement

COVID-19 coronavirus has been reported in all states, with some areas experiencing community spread of the disease. Travel increases chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.

Therefore, DHS issues this guidance to balance essential work-related out-of-state and international travel conducted by DHS and the Community Umbrella Agency (“CUA”) in performance of their duties with maintaining the health and safety of staff as well as the families they serve. In doing so, DHS’ ultimate goals of child safety and well-being as well as protecting the integrity of families through engagement are fully met.

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PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

This procedure explains strategies for DHS and CUA to limit COVID-19 exposure from their staff’s essential work-related out-of-state or international travel, including when quarantining upon their return is necessary.

PROCEDURE and PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES *(what happens, who does it, what are the time frames, how is it documented)*

Out-of-state or international travel must only be approved where the trip is essential, and the purpose of the trip cannot be accomplished through other means. DHS and CUA must ensure staff do not report to work in-person, let alone travel out-of-state or internationally on behalf of DHS, when they are sick or will be traveling with someone who is sick.

COVID-19 Excused Time

If DHS staff returning to Pennsylvania from approved work-related travel must quarantine and are unable to work from home (e.g., due to illness), COVID Excused Leave may be used. There is no requirement to use accrued personal leave when DHS staff are required to quarantine upon returning to Pennsylvania for work-related travel.

Assessment Upon Return from Travel

DHS staff must complete the City of Philadelphia’s self-administered screening assessment tool prior to the start of **each onsite shift or workday** (including those upon return from work-related travel) and follow the assessment tool prompts on how to inform their department of their status. DHS staff must answer all screening questions truthfully.

- <https://www.phila.gov/employee-screener/#/>

CUA must ensure their staff undergo an assessment (e.g., self-administered or supervisor directed questionnaire) upon their return to Pennsylvania from work-related travel and are cleared prior to resuming in-person casework contacts on behalf of DHS.

- Have you cared for or had close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last two weeks?
- Have you had a measured temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher in the last 24 hours?
- Do you currently have two or more of the following symptoms? (Feel feverish or chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea).

Out of State Travel

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DHS and CUA must ensure that their staff who are required to travel to an area where there are known reported increased rates of COVID-19 cases not report to work if they are experiencing any symptoms.

- CUA must ensure that their staff who do not experience any symptoms and are cleared to return to work still practice social distancing and wear a mask at all times while at work, even while in cubicles or private offices, for 14 days.
- CUA must also ensure their staff self-monitor for symptoms of the virus for those 14 days and, if any symptoms manifest, stay home and follow guidance on the PDPH website.

CUA must ensure that staff who quarantine consult with their respective chain of command for further directive. At this time, DHS and CUA staff traveling to the following states will need to quarantine for 14 days upon return *if symptomatic*:

- Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah

The list of states are subject to change based on CDC, DOH and PDPH guidelines. Therefore, DHS and CUA must ensure that staff, when traveling out of state with approval from their assigned chain of command, review DOH travel guidance prior to returning to Pennsylvania to determine if quarantining is necessary:

- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx>

International Travel

All essential international travel on behalf of DHS must be done in accordance with the United States Department of State health advisories. Therefore, at this time, all international travel should be avoided where possible due to the global impact of COVID-19.

When traveling internationally with approval from their assigned chain of command, DHS and CUA must ensure their staff review the Department of State travel advisory and CDC guidance prior to booking the flight as well as on the travel date before leaving to ensure compliance:

- <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-other-countries.html/>

In no circumstance shall work-related travel be approved to a country in which a Global Level 4 Health Advisory has been issued.

Infection Mitigation Strategies

During essential work-related travel, DHS and CUA must ensure their staff use infection mitigation strategies to protect themselves and others during their trip. These include:

- Cleaning hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after having been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub your hands together until they feel dry.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoiding close contact with others through maintaining 6 feet of physical distance from others.

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- Wearing an appropriate face covering in public.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve, and then washing hands afterward.
- Complying with all state or local guidance.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- Where work-related out-of-state or international travel is deemed essential, the reasoning for such must be incorporated into an approved memorandum from the chain of command and included in the case record.
- All discussions with parents or legal guardians, chain of command, as well as consultations with the Law Department and DHS Nurses to determine whether travel is essential must be documented in a Structured Progress Note (“SPN”) in the electronic case record, and any relevant documents regarding the travel must be uploaded to the electronic case record.
- All work-related contacts conducted while traveling must be documented in a SPN and uploaded to the electronic case record.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS AND
RESOURCES:**

Attachments:

Forms:

Related Policies or

Procedures:

Other Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/faqs.html>

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx>

POLICY AND PROCEDURE REVIEW AND APPROVAL

APPROVED BY:

Kimberly Ali, Commissioner

Samuel B. Harrison III, Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare
Operations

Gary D. Williams, Deputy Commissioner, Policy Development
and System Enhancement

Carla Sanders, Operations Director

Staci Boyd, Operations Director

REVIEWED BY:

Luis A. Santiago, Policy and Planning Administrator

DRAFTED BY:

Michael Pratt, Esq., Deputy City Solicitor, Law Department

APPROVAL SIGNATURE

(Authorizing Leadership Name and title)

Signature:



Date: 8/14/2020

Name:

Kimberly Ali

Title: Commissioner