



**UPDATE FOR PREVENTION, FOSTER CARE, AND CLOSE TO HOME PROVIDERS ON ACS
PERFORMANCE MONITORING REQUIREMENTS
March 31, 2020**

This memorandum provides guidance to ACS Contracted Prevention, Foster Care and Close to Home (CTH) Providers on ACS Performance Monitoring during the COVID-19 emergency in New York City. This guidance will be updated as necessary in the coming weeks.

ACS will continue to use our quality assurance systems to determine as best we can that children served by foster care, prevention and CTH programs remain safe and well cared for during the COVID-19 emergency. Additionally, we will generate data as necessary to support our provider agencies' operational needs.

1. PAMS reviews (Prevention, Foster Care and Close to Home)

ACS will continue to conduct PAMS reviews. PAMS reviews happen behind the scenes; ACS staff are reading case documentation in CONNECTIONS and we do not require anything from the agencies except when a reviewer notes an urgent concern and generates an alert.

- **Safety alerts** require immediate attention by the agency as they reflect urgent concerns about the health and safety of children and/or their families. If the provider agency is unable to respond quickly, Agency Program Assistance (APA) monitors will make every effort to accommodate and support providers in addressing the concern.
- **Risk alerts** do not require an agency response at this time. Risk alerts will be tracked by the APA team, and the provider agency will be notified if the risk concern has the potential to rise to an immediate safety issue if not addressed.
- DYFJ's OPPP team will track all alert types and review CONNECTIONS for responses to safety alerts. In addition, OPPP will continue to analyze the providers PAMS data and conduct calls (telephone or virtual) to review the agency's information.

PAMS reviews currently underway are assessing case practice in months well before the emergency. When we begin to review cases active during the emergency, reviewers will adjust to incorporate all current ACS guidance on case practice, including videoconferencing, family time/visitation, family team conferencing and other topics.

ACS will continue to share preliminary PAMS reports with provider agencies upon completion of Round One and Round Two reviews for FY20. All Prevention ADVPO case reviews are suspended from the PAMS review at this time. These cases will be replaced with child welfare cases in the sample, if applicable.

2. Monthly Safety Checks

Monthly Safety Checks for foster care and prevention will continue as scheduled. The APA monitors have been trained on the case practice guidance shared with providers and will accommodate the changes. Nonetheless, the standard minimum requirements for casework contacts remain in place and gaps in contacts will spur a safety check. APA will contact agencies in those instances where follow up is necessary.

3. Scorecard data requirements and scoring

FY20 Scorecard: The COVID-19 emergency will impact providers' ability to achieve their outcome, process and practice targets on several Foster Care and Prevention Scorecard measures. FY20 Scorecards will be provided as an FYI, but providers will not be scored or ranked.

Quarterly reports: On a quarterly basis, PAMS and the Office of Research and Analytics (ORA) typically share Scorecard summary and child/case level reports with providers to enable them to review and track their progress and check for any data errors. ACS understands that providers' QA teams may have limited capacity at this time to review non-essential data and therefore, ACS will limit its data sharing to support core safety-related requirements and day-to-day operations. ACS PPM is working closely with DPS and FPS to determine data priorities and to identify which data reports will continue or be expanded.

- Preventive quarterly data: All PPRS agencies, regardless of contract status, will receive the full set of quarterly Scorecard performance data for Q1 and Q2 of FY20 (July-December) by the end of the fiscal year. The production of Q3 and Q4 data (for continuing programs only) will be put on hold to focus on providers' critical operational data needs, such as casework contacts, utilization and case closure information (see below).
- Foster Care quarterly data: As of March 13, 2020, providers should have received permanency data covering the Q1 and Q2 periods. ACS will continue to monitor and share Maltreatment in Care (MIC) and casework contact data for the January through June 2020 period. There will be an extended rebuttal process for MIC data. In support of provider operations, ACS will also share critical Scorecard data related to children on Trial Discharge, placement stability, and other measures deemed useful.

Data to support operations: We are interested in hearing from providers about data that would be useful during this challenging time. We are interested in suggestions that will serve entire categories of providers, such as all prevention providers, all residential care providers, all Foster Boarding Home programs and all Close To Home providers. For example: We are undertaking analysis to help foster care providers identify children who may be ready to return home but for a court hearing, so that alternative approaches with the court and legal representation may be pursued.

Scorecard FY19 and FY21: Information about the release of the FY19 Scorecard will be shared with providers this Spring. In the coming months, ACS will develop plans for the FY21 PAMS and Scorecard methodologies that incorporate anticipated effects of the COVID-19 emergency on system practice and performance. These expectations will be communicated with COFCCA and providers to engage their feedback.

4. Collaborative Quality Improvement (CoQI)

At this time, CoQI activities are suspended until further notice. While the APA monitors will receive the PAMS data reports, they will be saved and not used for collaborative planning at this time. Any already-scheduled PEMs will be cancelled.

5. Foster Care Agency Monthly Status Reports and Targets

PPM is working with FPS to reassess the most useful approach to monthly data reports and annual targets. More information will follow in the coming weeks. FPS and FCLS are also communicating with the Family Court about options for continuing permanency hearings, reunifications, adoptions and KinGAPs as the Court gets its operations online.

6. Close to Home

Discussions and development on the FY20 Close to Home Performance Report will continue during this time with a focus on finalizing methodologies and reviewing provider feedback.

Monthly Close to Home monitoring visits will shift to provider self-assessment during this emergency period, with videoconference participation from OPPP monitors. Overnight and Heightened Monitoring Visits may continue where a critical health and safety need is identified.

**If you have any questions, please send them to our provider questions email address:
covid19providerquestions@acs.nyc.gov**

Thank you for your hard work in this extraordinarily difficult time!