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**Subject:** NEW COVID-19 Guidance - RHY providers

**Importance:** High

Dear providers,

In an effort to maintain social distancing while continuing to practice fire safety, OCFS is temporarily reinterpreting the regulatory requirement related to monthly fire drills (182-1.10(h)(9) and 182-2.10(h)(9)). The regulation reads “Staff and residents shall be instructed and drilled in the emergency evacuation of the building on a regular basis, and all such instruction and drills shall be documented.” This requirement is interpreted to mean fire drills are to be conducted in all certified programs monthly, and that the monthly drills will be conducted on different shifts.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the **temporary** interpretation will allow for staff and youth to *discuss* the program’s fire drill procedures and log this conversation in place of what would normally be a full drill. When the crisis is over, programs will be required to resume full fire drills in accordance with the standard interpretation above. Programs may continue to conduct fire drills if they wish, or they may elect to use the alternate interpretation if they believe it is in the best interests of the health and safety of their staff and youth.

To date OCFS has provided the following guidance to RHY programs:

- OMH Supplemental Guidance – Use of Telehealth for Residential Services (3/22)
- OMH Supplemental Guidance – Use of Telehealth for OMH-funded programs (3/22)
- Essential businesses (3/20)
- Documenting COVID-19 expenses (3/20)
- Quarantine and isolation (3/18)
- Visitor restrictions and required screening of all persons (3/17)
- Community based visits and visitor screening (3/9)
- Downloadable and printable posters on hand washing, hygiene, and strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (3/9, 3/11)
- Various resources from NYS DOH and the various federal agencies (ongoing)

Please continue to elevate questions and concerns to your county health department, county RHY service coordinator, and to OCFS. Thank you for the incredible work you're all doing, and be safe!

Madeline

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