**To:**  ADAMH Boards
**From:**  Lori Criss, Director
**Date:**  March 12, 2020
**Re:**  Funding of Behavioral Health Services Delivered Via Telehealth

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The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) has developed a guidance document for providing behavioral health services via telehealth.   Please review and follow the guidance listed in this document:
https://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/coronavirus/telehealthguidance.pdf?ver=2020-03-10-172329-323.

The Department has identified the following funding opportunities that can be used to enhance or expand your telehealth services in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.  These funding sources are not limited to spending on current Board-contracted providers and agencies.  This funding should be made available to community partners both public and private and nonprofit and for-profit where necessary to support treatment.

**State Opioid Response (SOR)**:  The Department has allocated SOR funds to the Boards.  Boards may use funds available under the State Opioid Response grant for the implementation, expansion, or provision of telehealth services.  If you are interested in implementing or expanding telehealth services in your Board area or would like to connect with providers who are implementing services currently using teleheath, please email Christine Sielski at Christine.Sielski@mha.ohio.gov.

**Crisis Flex Funding:**  The Department allocated $5,750,000 to the Boards in SFY20 for Crisis Flex funds to help meet the needs of individuals and families as they arise to prevent or stabilize a substance use disorder or mental health crisis.  These funds are flexible and can be used to provide support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and may include spending on telehealth to address community spread.   You do not need to complete the data collection protocol associated with the crisis flex funds if used for this purpose, but you do need to track how you are using the funds for these purposes.  If you have any questions on the eligible use of this funding please contact Alisia Clark at Alisia.Clark@mha.ohio.gov.

**Block Grant:**  The Department has granted MH/SAPT Block Grant funds to the behavioral health Boards and providers.  SAMHSA encourages the use of Mental Health Block Grant and Substance Abuse, Prevention and Treatment Block Grant funds on innovative programming, such as telehealth and remote treatment options.  Telehealth is an important tool that may allow behavioral health prevention, treatment, and recovery to be conveniently provided in a variety of settings, helping to expand access, improve efficiency, save time, and reduce costs.  If targeted specifically to adults with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) and children with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), all telehealth treatment and or recovery supports are an allowable expense for MHBG funds.  SAPT funds can be used for telehealth as long as programming is directed to one or more of the priority populations served under the SAPT; pregnant women, women with substance use disorders and

their dependent children, primary prevention populations, IV drug users, and persons at risk for Tuberculosis.

SAMHSA also stresses the use of Block Grant funding for telehealth as an important strategy to promote integrated care.   If you have any questions on the eligible uses of funding for your grant award please check with your project lead and your project lead will coordinate with the Block Grant lead, Scott Wingenfeld, at Scott.Wingenfeld@mha.ohio.gov.

**Please keep documentation of the amounts and uses of funding that was used to combat the pandemic.  We will ask for this information to document activity.**  Keeping records and reporting this information will help us provide you with letters for your own organization accounting needs.

OhioMHAS has created a designated web page with information related to COVID-19.  Please visit https://mha.ohio.gov/Health-Professionals/About-Mental-Health-and-Addiction-Treatment/Emergency-Preparedness/Coronavirus.  An email box for behavioral health-specific questions related to the pandemic is:  COVID19BH@mha.ohio.gov.  This email box will be monitored frequently to help shape our planning and communication for continuity of care issues related to addiction and mental health treatment and recovery.

Please continue to take precautionary actions for your health and those around you. For more information and the latest updates on COVID-19 you can visit: https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/.  All non-behavioral health specific COVID-19 questions should be directed to the Ohio Department of Health at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH or 1-833-427-5634.

This memo will also be released through eNews Now and shared through our other stakeholder organizations to push out through their networks.