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Date: August 4th, 2021

To: NYS Health Homes Serving Adults and Specialty Mental Health Care Management Agencies

From: The Office of Mental Health

Re: NYS COVID-19 State Disaster Emergency, Executive Order No. 202, Health Home Plus

At the onset of the NYS COVID-19 State Disaster Emergency, DOH issued flexibilities to allow all Health Home services to be provided telephonically – including HH+ – with the expectation that in-person contacts continue to be provided when appropriate for the health and safety of the individual. On June 25, 2021, DOH issued “NYS COVID-19 State Disaster Emergency, Executive Order No. 202” guidance for Health Homes, Care Coordination Organization/HHs, and Care Management Agencies, extending these flexibilities for the duration of the Public Health Emergency or until otherwise directed by DOH, and as directed by applicable partner State Agencies for serving special populations.

This memorandum provides additional guidance to Specialty MH CMAs serving the high-need HH+ population with SMI.

Transitioning out of the NYS Disaster Emergency: Specialty MH CMAs should resume full Health Home Plus SMI program requirements in a timeframe that aligns with the waiver extension issued for OMH programs serving individuals with SMI. This includes the reinstatement of the minimum number of in-person contacts required for HH+ *to every extent possible*. In-person contact is a core component of the HH+ service that allows Care Managers to develop relationships and actively engage individuals, evaluate their environment, and provide outreach efforts necessary to support the HH+ population through this transition. In cases where in-person contacts pose a health or safety risk to the staff or enrollee, staff may continue to meet with clients using telehealth, including both audio-visual and audio-only (telephonic) communication, provided a clear risk-benefit determination is documented in the record. Assuming all other program requirements are met, Health Homes may bill the full HH+ rate when services are provided via telehealth or in person. Please refer to the [OMH Infection Control Manual](#) for factors to consider when making a risk-benefit determination. Wearing of masks and continued 6-foot physical distancing is required for all in-person contacts.

Policy changes post-Transition: There are no planned changes to program requirements in the [Health Home Plus Program Guidance for High-Need Individuals with Serious Mental Illness](#). The State will continue to evaluate the HH+ program and consider amending requirements consistent with outcome-driven practices and incentives.

For questions, technical assistance or resources to support this work, please contact the Specialty Mental Health Care Management mailbox: SpecialtyMH_HHCM@omh.ny.gov . Thank you for your continued work with some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers.