

Date: April 3, 2020
Memo to: Providers of Mental Health/Behavioral Health Services
From: Janet Ahern, Guardianship Administrator
Subject: **Consent for Telehealth**

During the current COVID-19 public health crisis, many youth will receive mental health treatment through telecommunication modes. The DCFS Guardian's Office, Office of Legal Services, and Division of Clinical & Child Services have worked together to develop a temporary process to use only during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Consents for youth under the age of 18 will go through the **Guardian's Consent Hotline (800-828-2179)**, and the request will be submitted through the CFS 431-1 Consent form. If telehealth is used, the consent staff will fill out the additional Informed Consent for Telehealth Services form, which is attached.

Informed consent for youth over the age of 12 is required on both the CFS 431-1 Consent form and the Informed Consent for Telehealth Services form. The mental health provider should explain the parameters of telehealth regarding privacy. Acknowledging that an original signature may be difficult to obtain during this crisis, the following means of consent – in order of preference – will be accepted by the DCFS Guardian's Consent Unit from the youth during this crisis:

1. Original signature from youth.
2. Electronic signature from youth (which will be available as soon as DCFS procures a process for this).
3. Send consent form to youth and obtain verbal consent provided by youth to mental health provider, followed by an e-mail from youth to mental health provider, stating that the youth understands and agrees to the treatment and the parameters of telehealth services. Additionally, youth shall send a signed copy of the consent when available. All efforts shall be documented in case notes.
4. Read the terms of consent to youth and obtain verbal consent provided by youth to mental health provider, stating that the youth understands and agrees to the treatment and the parameters of telehealth services. Provider will send youth a hard copy of the consent in a self-addressed envelope for youth to sign and return to provider. All efforts shall be documented in case notes.

Questions should be directed to the Guardian's Consent Hotline at 800-828-2179.