Suspension of physical exam requirements for foster children at placement and annually

TOPIC
Suspension of requirements of the responsible social services agency to arrange for preventative medical exams at initial placement and annually. This ensures foster children’s well-being, and helps to stop the spread of COVID-19.

PURPOSE
Provide information on suspension of physical medical examination requirements for foster children at placement and annually.

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SIGNED

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TERMINOLOGY NOTICE
The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.
I. Background

As Minnesota experiences the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota Department of Human Services (department) staff are reviewing circumstances where modification of policy and practice are needed to align with measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 through social distancing and quarantine.

The responsible social services agency is required to determine if children had a physical examination within the 12 months preceding placement and annually in subsequent years. When an agency determines that a foster child has not had a physical examination within the 12 months prior to placement, it shall ensure an exam within 30 days of placement. [Minnesota Statutes, sections 260C.007, subdivision 27a and 260C.219 (d)]

II. Suspended policy

Governor Tim Walz signed Emergency Executive Order 20-12 on March 20, 2020, permitting the department’s commissioner to temporarily waive or modify state statute. In response to the state statutory waiver, the commissioner approved a waiver to suspend requirements that the responsible social service agency arrange for a preventative medical exam within 30 days of placement and annually thereafter. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and national public health emergency, routine preventative health care is not readily available during this health care crisis.

III. Requirements

Although a temporary waiver has been approved, the responsible social service agency is required to contact child’s most recent medical provider and review their medical care records, inquiring about any current health needs. This waiver does not apply to a foster child’s immediate health care needs, or a child with a medical diagnosis that requires a medical care plan or specified treatment. The responsible social service agency is required to seek timely appropriate medical care, if needed.

The Social Service Information System (SSIS) Business and MNIT-SSIS staff are working to assess the impact of this modification on the child welfare system. Future SSIS Updates will provide additional information about this modification.

IV. Resources

For more information see the following resources:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) webpage
- [Minnesota Department of Human Services](https://www2.humanservices.state.mn.us) webpage (sign up for email notifications)
- [Minnesota Department of Health](https://www.health.mn.gov) webpage
- [BeReadyMN](https://www.be.ready.mn.gov) webpage
• Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau webpage

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-431-4670 (voice) by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency’s ADA coordinator.