

**NUMBER**

#20-68-17

**DATE**

April 21, 2020

**OF INTEREST TO**

County Directors

Social Services Supervisors and  
Staff

Tribal Social Services  
Supervisors and Staff

County Attorneys

Tribal Attorneys

**ACTION/DUE DATE**

Please read information and  
implement modified policy

**EXPIRATION DATE**

April 21, 2022

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

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### 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.

### CONTACT

Child Safety and Permanency Division:  
[dhs.csp.fostercare@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.csp.fostercare@state.mn.us)

### SIGNED

NIKKI FARAGO  
Assistant Commissioner  
Children and Family Services

### 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](#) webpage
- [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#) webpage (sign up for email notifications)
- [Minnesota Department of Health](#) webpage
- [BeReadyMN](#) 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.