

Message to Home Support Agencies

To provide high quality services to clients under the Long Term Care and Disability Support Programs, the Department of Social Development would like to offer advice for home support agencies.

This advice is meant to provide possible areas in which agencies may modify services to meet clients' needs as best as possible while also addressing potential staffing issues. The safety and security of staff and clients should always be a priority when making decisions about service delivery. We know you are aware of the needs of your clients, and we trust that each agency and staff will use discretion and judgement to make the best decisions possible regarding the modification of the service delivery.

Meal preparation services: Workers and agencies should consider preparing multiple days of meals in a single visit rather than maintaining meal preparation as a daily task. This could be helpful in reducing the number of visits while ensuring that clients have nutritious meals available. Workers should ensure they pay attention to food safety practices at when preparing meals.

Housekeeping services: Housekeeping tasks should be completed in situations where a client's mobility around their home could be negatively impacted without the service. In other situations, the service could be reduced to a weekly clean.

Medication management: Clients receiving medication management as part of their service plan should receive, as an absolute minimum, a daily phone check-in. Some clients will continue to require a daily visit or multiple shorter visits. Workers are encouraged to use creative methods that respect social distancing. For example, these visits could be provided virtually or from a distance of at least six feet or two meters to ensure medication is available and taken appropriately.

Respite care: Clients and their families who receive respite care should have this service maintained to the best of agency availability.

Personal care services/attendant care: Some clients may be able to have showers/baths less frequently than they currently receive in their service plan. Other clients may have more family availability to assist with stand-by assistance. Clients with higher needs may still require daily support in this area. Agencies should be aware of these clients and have plans in place to respond.

Foot and nail care services: These services should not be provided at this time. However, if a client is high-risk and there are continued concerns, they should consult with their primary healthcare provider.

Home support agencies are encouraged to be open to different ways of doing things as we continue to work through this pandemic. Agencies should consider tasks that workers may be able to complete over the phone or remotely. Staff who experience a reduction in hours could complete other tasks (medication reminders, meal prep, errands, etc). Agencies could consider adjusting schedules to ensure required services are provided in the most efficient way possible.

Like all home support services, virtual service delivery must continue to comply with expectation of confidentiality outlined in the Service Agreement. In situations where providers are working from home or other non-standard locations, they must ensure that virtual communication is done in a private setting (unless in emergency situations).

Please refer to the [Coronavirus webpage](#) for further information and updates around providing services.