



Policy 1734.02 COVID-19 Interim Crisis Dispatch Protocols
Updated October 2020
Initially prepared March 2020

North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (North Sound BH-ASO) Numbered Memorandum 2020-002 implemented temporary limitations to non-essential crisis services to protect the health and safety of our contracted providers and the public in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Volunteers of America (VOA) and contracted Designated Crisis Responders (DCRs) shall implement the following interim COVID-19 dispatch protocols:

- Note: In response to the COVID-19 outbreak and pending HB 2099 allowing video interviews by DCRs, the requirement for face-to-face contact prior to the closing of the case through a disposition to VOA is currently suspended. Alternative methods such as Telemedicine contact are encouraged as applicable.

VOA Screening and Referrals

VOA shall determine the location of the dispatch request and prioritize DCR referrals to emergency departments (Eds), jails, law enforcement and Crisis Stabilization and Triage facilities.

1. If the location of the dispatch request is determined to be at a facility or location in which DCRs have been directed to temporarily suspend face-to-face outreaches (residential facilities such as assisted living facilities, nursing homes or adult family homes based on current Department of Health (DOH) recommendations), VOA Care Crisis line will:
 - a. Communicate temporary suspension of face-to-face voluntary outreaches and that DCR dispatches may not result in a face-to-face contact;
 - b. Communicate that the DCR office is willing to follow up with the requester(s) and attempt all available alternatives to support the individual.
2. VOA will implement the following screening question for crisis dispatch:
 - a. "Have you or anyone in your household currently exhibiting or within the past 14 days been exposed to a person with possible COVID-19 symptoms consistent with WA DOH or CDC criteria.
3. If the requester(s) answer is **yes**, or reports as positive for symptoms listed:
 - a. and VOA determines dispatch is not required, VOA staff will encourage the referent to telephonically contact their primary care provider (PCP) or other health care professional for recommendations; or
 - b. if dispatch is required, VOA will refer the case to the DCR's office to determine dispatch response using methods that minimize COVID-19 exposure risks.

Mobile Crisis Outreach - DCR Dispatch

If the location of the dispatch request is determined to be at a facility or unstaffed location in which DCRs have temporarily suspend face-to-face outreaches due to COVID-19 risks, and an alternative location cannot be coordinated to mitigate COVID-19 risks:

1. The DCR will use methods that minimize COVID-19 exposure risk while investigating the case to determine if a Custody Authorization to the ED is warranted for further evaluation and treatment.