Good Afternoon – I hope this finds you all doing well. I am hoping that you might read and share this information with your clinicians.

As a community partner to you, we wanted to reach out and offer support as well as information about how the CoVid-19 Virus has impacted our work in Child & Adult Protection Services. We want to offer our assistance and partnership whenever possible during this challenging time. We also want to share our gratitude for your dedication in serving our community. We recognize the importance of your roles and that every day, you are supporting our community who is challenged by the new ways we are living, and preparing for the likelihood that we will see increasing struggles with mental health and wellbeing.

There have been no State or Federal waivers from the laws or regulations as to the provision of Child and Adult Protection Services in the State of Colorado. Since no waivers have been enacted, this means our jobs do not change from our typical responses or responsibilities. The only change for us is that we are remotely located in our homes due to the closure of our physical offices. We desire for our interactions with the community and you, to be as seamless as possible. Our hotline, referral review process, and our subsequent response on child & adult abuse/neglect investigations are all occurring the same as they always have. **Our hotline number still works as normal (303-636-1750) and remains available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.** Our staff are still required to make contact with citizens in the same ways, but we have provided limited amounts of personal protection equipment for our staff when deemed necessary for use with high risk or sick individuals.

We remind you of our availability because we have seen a nearly 60% decline in reports of child and adult abuse/neglect since our offices closed on March 17th. This is alarming to us. We are reaching out to all mandatory reporters to share our Co-Vid-19 response plan here in Arapahoe County and remind many of our community partners that the mandatory reporter laws as written are all still in effect.

We also want to remind you to report concerns of domestic violence when children are in the home or are involved in an incident. We have seen an increase in domestic violence situations, which we believe is as a result of increased at-home time together, placing more children in danger and with less eyes on - given they are not in a school setting. We have also seen an increase in reports of substance use impacting parents’ abilities to parent children safely.

We can support you in identifying abuse/neglect and interpreting interactions and information you receive via online or over the phone. We also want to encourage your agency to reach out or refer families, when you have concerns for community members that are reporting struggles with unemployment, financial hardship, family stress due to being at home and together, etc. As stressors increase for our families, we typically see an increase in their struggles to parent their children or care for an elderly or at risk family member. Our goal is to offer preventative services so the formal child and adult protection system won’t need to be involved. Our staff also want to support you and
families in ensuring everyone has access to resources to navigate those difficult times. We have also compiled resources for families that we have on our county website. For more information please go to https://arapahoeegov.com/covid19.

If there are other ways that we can support you while you navigate this complicated situation, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Michelle

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