



## ACS Statement on COVID-19

We continue to closely follow the impact of COVID-19 on the children and families we serve, our staff, and our community.

The Juvenile Courts in Middlesex County are fully open to the public and continue to operate in accordance with State-issued safety guidelines to prioritize the health and safety of court users and courthouse personnel. The Standing Order effective June 15, 2021 outlines which matters within the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court are being heard in person or can be heard virtually. The most recent Juvenile Court Standing Order regarding Court operations, prompted by the COVID-19 health crisis, can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/juvenile-court-rules/juvenile-court-standing-order-4-21-juvenile-court-operations>.

At this time, ACS clinicians are primarily working on-site. Each site is equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure that our staff and clients are as safe and comfortable as possible, while complying with all State-issued safety guidelines.

ACS staff are using telehealth platforms to continue to meet remotely with our young clients. The number of children in need of virtually delivered mental health care has grown as we continue to receive new referrals. In addition to instituting behavioral telehealth services in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, ACS continues to adapt and expand our service model in response to changes in the systems that serve children. With ongoing input from our clinical staff, we modify our recommendations to ensure that kids are being connected with the resources currently available in their home communities. Clinical flexibility and adaptability have always been among our greatest strengths and priorities as an organization.

As we navigate the health crisis through 2021 and beyond, taking into account the direction of statewide infection rates, we will continue to rely heavily on telehealth platforms in addition to in person and hybrid meetings in order to continue to provide evaluations and treatment.

### **Operational Updates**

As the Juvenile Court Clinics take steps to adjust to the evolving health crisis, ACS executive staff participate in bi-weekly, statewide conference calls with leadership in the Department of Mental Health and the Juvenile Court Clinics across the Commonwealth.

ACS has established detailed staffing and safety protocols specific to the needs of each of our four sites. All staff have agreed to these measures.

### **We are here for you**

We are grateful for your continued support and belief in our mission during these very trying times.

If we can be helpful to you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us at [acs@acskids.org](mailto:acs@acskids.org). We check our email throughout the day and will respond as quickly as possible.