



## 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 open, but continue to limit the number of persons entering courthouses. All matters within the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court are being heard virtually unless the matter can be handled more effectively or efficiently in person. 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-10-20-court-operations-under-the-exigent>.

At this time, ACS clinicians are still primarily working remotely in order to limit in-person contact. Each site is staffed by one clinician each day who is able to respond to emergency matters, as needed. We have purchased a range of 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. As we navigate the health crisis through 2020 and beyond, taking into account the direction of statewide infection rates, we will continue to rely heavily on telehealth platforms 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 daily, 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.

Please stay home when possible and practice physical distancing, but stay connected to others. We're all in this together and social connection is critical during stressful times. As current circumstances evolve, we will continue to keep you posted on our work with the children and families in our community.

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.