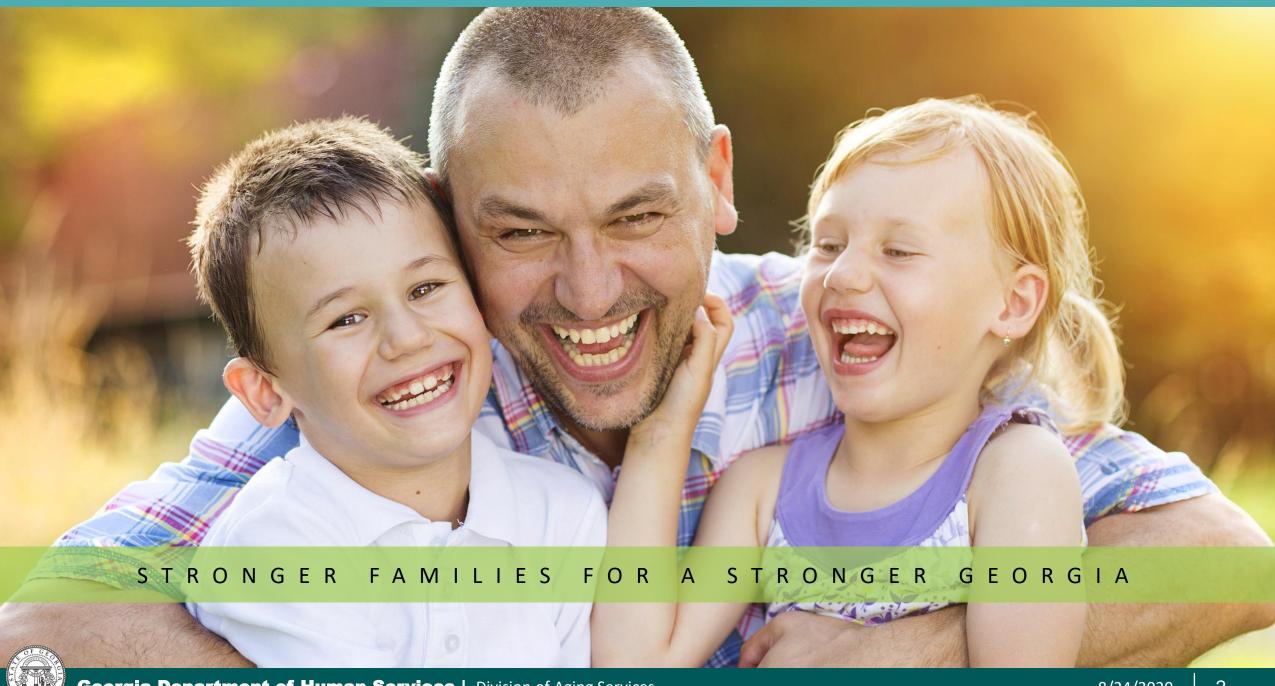**Georgia Department of Human Services**

Division of Aging Services Review

Adult Protective Services and Public Guardianship Office Temporary Operating Procedures

Abby Cox

Director

STRONGER FAMILIES FOR A STRONGER GEORGIA

Division of Aging Services
— VISION —

LIVING LONGER,
LIVING SAFELY,
living well

Temporary Operating Procedures (TOP) Overview

- Purpose of TOP
  - ➢ Provide time-limited governance of direct services during the critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic
  - ➢ Allow for measures consistent with our core charge of ensuring the safety of disabled adults and older adults while simultaneously taking efforts to reduce possible health risks to personnel
  - ➢ Provide guidance for contacts involving initial responses to newly assigned Adult Protective Services (APS) reports, monthly contacts with APS clients and monthly contacts with persons under guardianship

- Applicability
  - ➢ APS and Public Guardianship Office (PGO)

TOP Overview

- Process
  - ➤ Involves APS Central Intake inquiring about and documenting reporter knowledge of alleged victim's risks regarding COVID-19
  - ➤ Involves APS and PGO staff members taking precautions when preparing for and responding to clients with current APS cases, newly assigned investigations and guardianship cases requiring an in-person contact
  - ➤ When applicable, involves utilizing Skype, Facetime, or similar applications to facilitate virtual "face to face" contacts with clients

TOP Overview

- TOP Revisions
  - ➢ TOP was first put in place on March 20, 2020
    - ❖ First version allowed for limited in-person client contacts based on COVID-19 risk questions
    - ❖ If no concerns were present based on risk questions, staff completed the in-person contact per policy and procedures
    - ❖ If concerns of COVID-19 were present based on risk questions, staff followed telephonic procedures outlined in the TOP

TOP Overview

- TOP Revisions Continued
  - The 2nd major TOP revision was issued March 25, 2020
    - ❖ DAS aligned with the Governor's Executive Shelter in Place Order
    - ❖ Procedures involved:
      - APS and PGO went to a purely telephonic TOP while supply orders for personal protective equipment (PPE) were placed
      - Telework
      - Weekly telephone contact
      - Engaging law enforcement for welfare check
      - APS and PGO attended virtual court procedures when available
      - Statute requires APS to make in-person client contact on investigations
        - o Investigations remained open until the TOP was lifted and in-person client contacts resume
        - o Supervisors worked with staff on case prioritization for when in-person contact resumes
      - PGO maintained a list of clients who have tested positive to include daily updates of their condition
      - Utilizing virtual methods, when available, to contact clients

TOP Overview

- TOP Revisions Continued
  - ➢ Current TOP was put in place on June 26, 2020
    - ❖ DAS has secured PPE (masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, etc.) for APS and PGO field staff
    - ❖ In-person client contact has resumed if no concerns based on COVID-19 risk questions
    - ❖ APS and PGO staff are required to wear PPE when making in-person client contact
    - ❖ APS and PGO staff still adhere to visitation restrictions facilities may have in place
    - ❖ When in-person client contact is not safe based on risk questions:
      - o Staff follow the telephonic procedures
      - o Utilize virtual methods, when available, to contact clients
      - o APS investigations remain open until it is safe to resume in-person client contact

TOP Overview

- TOP Moving Forward
  - ➢TOP related practices are communicated by the DAS Deputy Director to APS and PGO field staff
  - ➢DAS Deputy Director meets with APS and PGO leadership staff bi-monthly to review progress of the TOP and get feedback on any needed edits to the TOP
  - ➢DAS Deputy Director may send additional information and guidance to field staff during the period of this TOP, as needed
  - ➢TOP may be revised or lifted at any time as deemed necessary

Questions

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