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As families and medical providers focus on responding to COVID-19, YouthCare transition to be postponed

Launch of enhanced healthcare program delayed at least 30 days

Springfield, Illinois – Recognizing the unprecedented challenges families, medical providers, and state agencies are facing from COVID-19, the launch of YouthCare services for DCFS youth in care will be postponed a minimum of 30 days, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services announced today.

Letters are being sent to all families and group homes informing them of this delay. In close coordination with the Illinois Department of Public Health and stakeholders across the state, HFS and DCFS will assess the timeline as we move forward and announce a new transition date as soon as possible.

“With more medical providers than ever, teams of dedicated care coordinators and other vital services never offered before, we look forward to offering this enhanced care to vulnerable youth as soon as possible,” said Theresa Eagleson, Director of the Department of Healthcare and Family Services. “But the challenges facing our healthcare system and families at this time as a result of the coronavirus must be our top focus, and we are determined not to distract from those crucial priorities.”

“The safety and health of the children we serve is, and always will be, my top priority,” said Marc Smith, Director of the Department of Children and Family Services. “The transition to Managed Care will improve the coordination and access to health services for youth in care. But addressing the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19 outbreak must be a priority at the moment. Delaying the rollout will allow DCFS to remain focused on addressing the emerging challenges of COVID-19 and ensure a smooth transition to YouthCare in the months ahead.”

HFS and DCFS have been working closely with the ACLU and other crucial stakeholders to bolster several aspects of the program’s operations. YouthCare already offers more than three times as many medical providers as the current DCFS healthcare system. More than 90 percent of major providers in the current system have already joined YouthCare. The program also offers more providers across every major category than the current system, from hospitals and primary care physicians, to vision and dental.

During the delay, YouthCare staff will continue to remain available to support families, including through the Rapid Response system, at 844-289-2264 or ILYouthCare@centene.com.

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