



March 19, 2020

INFORMATION

COUNCIL ON SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT

Notice of Enforcement Discretion during COVID-19 disaster, regarding use of online and telephone platforms to provide sex offender treatment

Effective March 19, 2020: The Council on Sex Offender Treatment has been monitoring the COVID-19 disaster very closely to assist licensees in continuing to provide care to sex offenders and juveniles who commit sexual offenses. CSOT standards of practice require that interventions utilized in the assessment and treatment of sex offenders and juveniles who commit sexual offenses must be empirically supported and generally accepted by professionals in this field.

Although at present, no body of research provides insight into the effectiveness of telemedicine or telehealth treatment with our population, at this time CSOT will NOT consider the use of such delivery platforms as a violation of CSOT standards of practice. During the COVID-19 disaster, licensees may utilize these methods of contact with sex offense clients according to their professional judgment. This includes use of online and telephone platforms to provide individual therapy to clients. Licensees should use the most secure delivery service available in order to maintain client safety and confidentiality. Licensees should communicate with referral sources to inform them that treatment will be provided in this manner.

The Council on Sex Offender Treatment is an independent licensing board administratively attached to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The Council, as an independent entity, maintains a management structure and decision-making authority separate from HHSC. This message is an official communication from the Council on Sex Offender Treatment.