

HOPWA Flexibilities HOPWA Intake, Initial, and Annual Certifications Using Remote Methods

Morgan Stevenson: Thank you for joining us today. We're excited you could all be here. We're going to give folks a few more minutes to keep joining. We'll probably get started in about five minutes or so. Thanks. Hello everyone. Welcome. Thank you for joining today's webinar. We're giving others just a few more minutes to continue joining and then we'll go ahead and get started. Hello everyone. Welcome. Thank you for being here today. If you're just joining us, you still have a couple of minutes to continue getting settled. Go grab your tea, coffee, lunch, pen, and paper. Settle in and we're going to give folks a couple more minutes to keep joining and then we'll get started. Thank you. Okay. Hello everyone.

Welcome to today's webinar. Thank you for joining us. Thank you for taking the time to be here. We're going to go ahead and get started. So again, thank you. We appreciate you taking the time. As well as work to figure out new ways to continue to provide services and serve participants in these challenging times. So today's webinar is going to cover all things. HOPWA Intake Initial and Annual Certification Using Remote Methods. So before we dive into the content, I just wanted to go over a couple of housekeeping pieces. This webinar is being recorded just to note. It's being recorded and it will be available along with any handouts up on the HUD Exchange as soon as we can get it there, in a couple of weeks maximum.

If you have questions today, you all are on mute, so please use the question box to submit any questions. We will try to get to as many questions as we can. If we can't answer your question today, we'll be following up off-line. There is a handout today. A PDF of the slides. We're getting some feedback that, that is difficult for folks to do view. So if you're having a hard time viewing that, we're working on getting it fixed. But if you can't, don't worry, we will be sending it out. Emailing it out after the presentation. Okay, so with that, we're going to go ahead and get going.

But before we do, I want to just let you know who we have on today's call. So joining us from HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS housing we have Amy Palilonis, Senior Program Specialist, Ben Ayers, and Rita Harcrow. I'm sorry. Ben Ayers is Deputy Director and Rita Harcrow Director. So thank you so much to our OHA staff for being here with us today. I'm going to pass it over to you guys to say hello. that over to you guys to say hello. Okay, are you guys able to unmute? You might be having some technical difficulties. Heather or Steve. Are you guys able to unmute?

Heather Rhoda: Hi Morgan. Yes, I am unmuted.

Morgan Stevenson: Wonderful. Okay, well, Amy, Rita, or Ben if you guys are able to get unmuted in a moment and want to jump in and say hello, please feel free to do that.

Rita Harcrow: Good morning. We're unmuted now.

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Morgan Stevenson: I am sorry about that.

Rita Harcrow: No worries. Rita Harcrow here. I'm the Director of the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing and just want to say welcome. Thanks, everyone for taking time to join us today.

Morgan Stevenson: Thank you, Rita. We so appreciate you guys being here again. So from the Cloudburst group, we have myself, Morgan Stevenson, and then my colleagues Steve Ellis and Heather Rhoda. And they are going to kick us off and get going with today's learning objectives, and then dive into some content. So, Heather, I'll pass it to you.

Heather Rhoda: Great. Thank you very much. Hi everybody, and welcome to today's presentation. We're very excited that so many people were able to join. And we hope that you learn a lot of useful and valuable information today as you continue working with your clients. Next slide, please. The learning objectives in today's webinar, you will gain a better understanding of how you can continue to deliver HOPWA assistance using remote methods. Next slide. In this webinar, we're going to talk about HOPWA eligibility requirements, just as a refresher. I'm sure everybody is well aware of what those eligibility requirements are.

We're also going to review the incoming HIV status waiver flexibilities. We're going to talk about the HOPWA activities that can be conducted remotely. The different types of remote methods as well as how to plan, manage, and implement using remote methods. And then we'll have some time for questions and answers. And at the end of the presentation, include some resources, reminders, and some more reminders as well as, how to ask for and request HOPWA technical assistance, and submit a question to the HOPWA ask a question desk.

So diving right in. What are the HOPWA eligibility requirements? We're sure you're all aware, but first, let's review the eligibility requirements except for the HOPWA activity called housing information services. To be eligible for HOPWA, assistance at least one family member must be diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. This can include a minor. And total income of all family members must be at or below 80 percent of the area median income. And as you know, this income must be verified initially and then annually thereafter. Next slide.

So are there waivers regarding obtaining HIV documentation and income documentation? Yes, there absolutely are. The first mega waiver released on April 1, 2020 includes flexibilities related to obtaining documentation of both. HIV/AIDS verification and income. Income may be verified via self-certification and HIV/AIDS diagnosis may be verified via other credible information. This of course is if source or third-party documentation is not

available. Note that if using this waiver flexibility, the source or third-party documentation must be obtained within three months at the end of any public health emergency. We'll get into a little bit more about the specifics of each of these as we move along in the presentation. Next slide.

So when applying the HIV verification waiver, what does this mean? What does HUD guided say? In practice, programs may still be able to obtain appropriate source documentation of HIV status for many of your clients through testing centers or medical facilities. So those options should still be pursued whenever possible. When source documentation is not obtainable, or timely, grantees making use of this waiver option should have policies in place allowing for other credible information to be used to document HIV status.

In lieu of the source documentation, these policies...and make sure of this. These policies should include information about what other credible information means. The documentation requirements for program entry. The required timeline for collecting source documentation after COVID restrictions have been lifted. And the actions taken if HIV status cannot be documented via source documentation at the time. Remember in the previous slide, we talked about how if you are using this waiver flexibility, source or third-party documentation must be obtained within three months at the end of any public health emergency. Next slide.

So what happens if source third-party verification of HIV status cannot be obtained within three months or at all? Let's just start off, HUD expects this to be rare. If there are cases where source documentation verifying HIV status can't be obtained within the required three month period as would occur if the client is found not to be HIV positive, the client would cease to meet HOPWA program eligibility and should be terminated from the HOPWA assistance and directed to other non-HIV specific program resources.

In addition, I want to repeat, HUD does expect this to be rare. But be prepared to take action if this does occur. It's important to make sure that you're documenting client files throughout this entire period stating clearly that t other credible information was used to verify HIV status per the waiver. With this documentation in place, note that grantees and project sponsors providing HOPWA assistance to clients who may ultimately be shown to be ineligible based on HIV status, should not be subject to any payback requirements as applicable. Next Slide.

So what does other credible information mean? There are several ways a person could provide credible information on HIV status. Some examples include, during an intake or in conversation with an applicant or client, do they seem to know things about HIV medications, doctors in the area who treat HIV, viral suppression, their own status, and HIV medical history? Also,

note that other credible information can be provided by a referral from another HIV specific agency that may have already obtained documentation of someone's HIV status. In addition, there might be a case manager within your organization who's already worked with the client who knows them to be HIV positive. So there a lot of flexibilities and a lot of different options you have to choose from to verify HIV status. Next slide.

So now that we talked about HIV status, what about documenting income? Self-certificate of income may be used in lieu of source documentation. We all know that HIV verification is only documented once upon determining eligibility for HOPWA assistance. But income eligibility determinations happen more frequently. At least annually and upon initial determination of assistance, and sometimes during an interim recertification if someone has a change in their household size or a change in their household income. Most income changes may not necessarily affect income eligibility, but it is possible for those receiving TBRA or facility-based housing that income changes could affect their share of rent. Remember that self-certification can also apply to these recertification's and use of self-certification requires notifying HUD that you're going to be using this waiver.

Another thing to keep in mind is that, in most cases, programs should continue to collect appropriate source documentation whenever possible. But if it's not available, you can certainly use self-certification of income. How does this play into self-certification of income regarding continuing to process annual and interim recertifications? Both of those activities do need to continue occurring. Those are normal program functions for rental assistance and especially during this time, more important for clients that may be negatively impacted by losses or income fluctuations. So programs should assure that those income losses are reflected, and taken into account, and interim recertification's continue to be processed so that program participants share of rent can be adjusted. Next slide.

So as you can see, the previously mentioned waivers support your overall ability as providers to work with clients remotely. So do you have the flexibility to work with clients remotely? Yes, you do. And a waiver is not required for that. Grantees and project sponsors are highly encouraged to conduct processes like income verification, rent calculations, lease review case management, and other activities using remote methods whenever it's warranted given local public health directives. Remote activities can be conducted by phone calls, videoconferencing, exchanging information through emails but make sure when you're implementing these remote methods...and we'll talk about this a little bit further into the presentation. Programs should carefully document all of those interactions and make sure that confidentiality protections are in place. Next slide.

Another item supporting working with clients remotely is that obtaining hard signatures from applicants or HOPWA assisted households is not required.

It's normally a locally imposed requirement. So it's not a HUD requirement per se. So grantees should look at all reasonable methods that will allow program activities to continue including temporarily bypassing any locally imposed hard signature requirements. You can use remote methods to do so. Documents can be signed, and scanned, and emailed back to programs. You can use electronic signatures or, if the above are not possible, you could also work with your clients and obtain verbal agreements from them to sign.

Make sure that all of this information is documented by program staff and maintain in client files. Hopefully, none of this is surprising to anybody. These are great resources and flexibilities that are allowable and are a wonderful opportunity to continue working with your client to make sure they're able to maintain stable housing and continuing to access assistant and much-needed services. Next slide. Sorry, Morgan. So what are the types of remote methods? We already touched on this a little bit. But to repeat, you can use videoconferencing. You can use phone calls. Text. Exchange of information via email or mail. And don't forget about confidentiality. We will get into this a bit more later on in the presentation.

So moving right along to the next slide. What is it really mean or look like to conduct an intake initial or annual recertification remotely? I like to think about it this way, we've all contacted clients by phone. Some prefer email and of course, we will use mail and faxing. I don't know if people still fax. But I suppose there are still fax machines. Often though, we would use those remote methods to initiate contact with clients to coordinate in-person appointments because we might need to complete its intake. Or we might need to do an initial or annual recertification rather than completing those entire processes remotely.

So part of our function as case managers and HOPWA program staff has always included some kind of remote methods. So some of this isn't new. So working with clients remotely is especially important during this time. Because programs are still required to determine HOPWA program eligibility. So when you are going to work with a client remotely and you might be doing an initial intake, or meeting the client for a first time, or beginning processes of determining if somebody's eligible for rental assistance; what does that look like?

In the next couple of slides, Steve's going to take over and we're going to show you using videoconferencing as an example a couple of video clips. Where Steve, who's acting as a HOPWA TBRA coordinator for a local organization called Port Landing, and Heather, myself acting as an applicant. And my name is Samantha. Recently called Port Landing and left a message inquiring about rental assistance options. Steve then contacted Samantha to schedule a video conference call, and also provided her with preliminary information about what will be discussed during the call including ways in

which HIV status and household income can be documented. So Steve take it away.

Steve Ellis: Thank you, Heather. So as we did on a previous webinar, we do have a few clips that we're going to show. The entire intake that we conducted via live streaming will also be available. So just as a quick introduction to this first slide, as Heather mentioned, we talked a little bit about her phone call. We did a little bit of prep work. We did some confidentiality work, which we'll discuss on the future slide. So when we start this clip, we were already sure that we're talking to the right people. We're talking about the right program. That the client is reporting having HIV. So all of that's out of the way before we get to this clip. Morgan, do you want to try to play the first example, please?

Morgan Stevenson: Yeah, let me get that loaded up.

Heather Rhoda: Grab your popcorn.

Morgan Stevenson: Exactly.

Steve Ellis: Alright, so it's just you and your two children ages 11 and 8.

Samantha: Correct.

Steve Ellis: Great. So there are two basic eligibility criteria for our program Samantha. One of which is HIV. So as you know from one of the many programs we offered from some of the information you submitted, I do need to prove that you or one of your two daughters has an HIV diagnosis.

Samantha: Okay, and that would be me. They do not. And you need certain types of verification or will we get into that?

Steve Ellis: Yeah, we can get into that right now. Yeah, so one of the things to prove that is, I just need to have something in a file to be able to prove that you have HIV. Whatever I have in the file it needs to be fairly obvious that you have been diagnosed with HIV so that anyone who comes in can read that file and understand that you are eligible. So what I want to go through is a few options that maybe we can prove eligibility now. And if not, then we can talk about some back steps to go ahead and move forward while we track down...

So while I have you on the call, some of the options could be...I don't know if you have access to any electronic records, but potentially we can screen share and I can take a screenshot and print that out. If that's an option that you take, I'll make sure to delete the screen share. Because once I have it in my file, I no longer need the electronic version. We could also do a screenshot if you have any paper around. Maybe you have your diagnosis or HIV labs or something that you can show. Other than that, we can do a verbal release of

information and I contact your infectious disease doctor. You can send something through the mail. Whatever you're most comfortable with. It is your information, so I want to make sure you choose something that you're okay with.

Samantha: Alright. I have some papers here...collecting a bunch of information. Oh, right here. I have lab results. Is that something that would work? I'm not sure I can mail or do you want to...

Steve Ellis: Yeah. If you could show me now if you're comfortable. Because at least then, that way, we can prove eligibility and we can send a copy, so I have something.

Samantha: And I can just follow up with a hard copy.

Steve Ellis: Yeah. You just fold it, bit it a little further down. Excellent. I see your name. Perfect. If you could just go back, hold it up a little higher again. And perfect. It shows a viral load of below 20, which does work for verification. You're all good, good Samantha. So that, that will work. Congratulations on being undetectable.

Samantha: Thank you.

Steve Ellis: So at least for the rest of this conversation, I can assume eligibility. It would be great to get a copy of that. So if you either want to mail a copy in, in my follow-up email, the office is open a few hours each week. So you can call and schedule a quick appointment, come in and someone can photocopy that if you'd rather hand it off to someone.

Samantha: Okay, yeah. Yeah, okay.

Steve Ellis: But that way, once we get that in the file, then we are set for all of your time with our agency for any activity that you were to apply for. Here from our first video example. We offer the client Samantha different methods that she could choose the most comfortable way for her to try to prove her HIV status when she revealed it was her and not anyone else in her family that had HIV. So going through the options that we were aware of that we were comfortable with doing, she was able to pick the one. So she had the labs available that she could show up to the screen.

So that way as I was determining her eligibility for the HOPWA program, I immediately had my eyes on HIV verification. So to the side, I was making a little note. I was going to put that note in the file verifying what I saw, when I saw it, and then as well as, as you saw in the clip the follow-up information about when I could get that source documentation in the file. Particularly because I knew she had it. So it's just a great way to make sure that using remote methods I could figure out if Samantha was eligible for HOPWA, do

documentation in that moment so there was a delay, but continue to follow up to get source documentation for the file. Heather, did you have anything you wanted to add about our first example?

Heather Rhoda: What I did like was that in prepping for the video, we actually did internally as Steve and I were role-playing, we actually did have a conversation between ourselves about what we needed to talk about first before we even had the videoconference, as if he was really program staff and I was an applicant seeking assistance. So I think that that's really important. So a lot of these items are presented cold to someone that you're just starting to talk to.

Steve Ellis: Great. So before we show our next clip, as we mentioned, these were clips of a larger intake. So we want to let you know as you heard a little bit on that first clip, we are already aware of Samantha's family size and composition. So in between after this HIV clip before the next one, we really started to figure out the other half of HOPWA eligibility, her income. So we talked about what income sources she or anyone in her family might have. If she expects any changes to her household or her income in the next 12 months. So during this conversation, Samantha confirmed that she's not expecting any changes. She's not expecting anyone to move in or to move out.

She once again confirmed that she has two children. Those children are ages 11 and 8. And through our conversation, we determined that Samantha works. So she has employment income. She has one of her children receives a Social Security Survivor's Benefit, which we do need to include as part of income eligibility. We asked about assets. Samantha reports she has a checking and savings account and that both of her children also have a savings account. So with that in mind, let's watch the second example. So let's go through source by source. So for your employment income, do you happen to have access to pay stubs?

Samantha: I do. I have a couple right here.

Steve Ellis: Oh, wonderful. How often do you get paid, Samantha?

Samantha: Every other week. Yeah, every other week.

Steve Ellis: Do you get paid twice a month or every other week? So where two times a year you actually get three paychecks in the month.

Samantha: Yes, that one. Every week.

Steve Ellis: So you get biweekly.

Samantha: Biweekly. Yeah.

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Steve Ellis: Alright. Just wanted to make sure. Do you know how much you earn per hour?

Samantha: Yes, I wish I earned more. But 12.50 right now.

Steve Ellis: 12.50. You said you're currently working 24 hours?

Samantha: Yes. Both paycheck stubs are showing...yeah, the past couple of weeks most recent periods I worked 24 hours.

Steve Ellis: Excellent. Do you have any expectations of your hours or wage changing in the near future?

Samantha: Not right now, no. I haven't heard anything from my employer about that. And actually, some people have been laid off, so I'm lucky that they just reduce my hours. So maybe I'll be able to pick up some hours here or there, but I haven't heard anything definite about that.

Steve Ellis: Alright. If that does change, please make sure to notify the program when that happens. At least for the time being, I think if you...when you drop off your HIV verification or however you want to send that in, because once I sent you an email, you can also if you have access to those via email, you can send it... If you could send that once again just so I have something in the file documenting everything that you just told me for your employment income. As for your daughter's security, do you have any documentation of that?

Samantha: Yes. Right here. Like you can see that when I say right here. Yes.

Steve Ellis: The document that you have, can you tell me how much does she make or receive?

Samantha: Five, twenty-five per month.

Steve Ellis: I'm going to rephrase that. Because I don't want to say Social Security "makes". The document that you have in your hand, can you tell me how much your daughter receives?

Samantha: Yes, 525 per month.

Steve Ellis: Five, twenty-five. Is that what she's supposed to receive or is that what she actually receives because some money is coming out?

Samantha: No, I'm sorry. I made a mistake. She was getting 525, and then it changed in April to 550. Okay, that's right.

Steve Ellis: So as of April 2020 correct?

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Samantha: Yes. Absolutely right. Yep.

Steve Ellis: Can you if you're comfortable with that also, can you hold up that Social Security letter? I would've asked you for the pay stubs, but those tend to be way more complex for us to review. And so what you've told me is enough, but the security would be great. Great. So I see your name. I see your daughter's name. I see the dates. I see them...oh and I see where it changed. Excellent.

Samantha: You can see initially...you know, but then I remembered 550.

Steve Ellis: So the same for the HIV documentation. Even though I've seen it, if you could make sure we get a paper copy of that, that would be much appreciated. And so finally, you reported having some checking and savings accounts.

Samantha: Yes.

Steve Ellis: Do you know roughly what that balance is in your checking account at any given time?

Samantha: Right around 1050.

Steve Ellis: And you said you don't think it has interest.

Samantha: I'm sure it doesn't.

Steve Ellis: As for savings, did I understand that you and each one of your daughters has a savings account?

Samantha: Yes. Yep.

Steve Ellis: So there's three. Do you know how much is in each account at any sort of given time?

Samantha: My account might roughly have about a thousand in it also. And each of the girls have 400 in each of their accounts.

Steve Ellis: And you said you don't know the interest rate.

Samantha: I don't. No. It's probably one percent or less. Right around that.

Steve Ellis: Alright, and once again, those are the only income sources that you have correct?

Samantha: Yes.

Steve Ellis: So as you can see from our second example, we reviewed Samantha's different income types for her household members. We showed you a couple of different methods during that clip including having Samantha self-certify her earned income as well as showing physical documentation of her daughter's Social Security income. Once Samantha self-verified her income, we walked her through what would've been on that paystub including how often, or the frequency of her pay, the number of hours, the rate. All of those pieces of information that we would need to calculate her annual income.

We didn't need that for the Social Security income because we are able to look at recent documentation and know what her income was. But you'll note one thing that happened during that conversation is when we asked for gross income, Samantha did catch herself and noticed that she initially said the wrong amount. So it's worth walking clients through any documentation that they might have to make sure they're sharing the accurate information there. Finally, since asset information can be pretty difficult to assess via any remote method, we did have Samantha self-certify those pieces of information.

As we had mentioned earlier, we did not in that moment calculate her household income or determined HOPWA eligibility. By just collecting that information, we're able to pause and take some time to make sure we're calculating everything correctly. And finally, at the end of that clip, you'll notice that we continue to mention the need for her to drop off physical documentation or to send this physical documentation for the file so all that was there in case a grantee or HUD came to monitor us. Heather, is anything you want to add about our second example?

Heather Rhoda: I think that was a really good point that you made Steve about Social Security Survivor benefits or Social Security income in general. Sometimes the notifications can be lengthy and have multiple pages, so it is good too if you can you know see a version. Or as you're talking to a client to walk them through a little bit and mentioned what amount they might be looking for and reiterate that it is the gross amount that you need. Unless of course, you'll be using the net amount in some situations. But in most cases, you're going to be using the gross amount.

Steve Ellis: Well, great. With our two examples out of the way, let's talk about how you manage different virtual certification methods. But first, before we go into different types of virtual remote methods, let's talk about confidentiality. So before discussing any confidential information over any remote method including program eligibility, program staff should review some piece of information with the client. So some of this would be topics such as confirming that the livestream room that we are using is locked. So in our particular example, before we went through the two clips, using the method that we did, I did confirm with Samantha that the room was locked so that no one else could join.

I let her know this not only for her own sense of safety or confidentiality but also for on this call or any future call that I might have with Samantha, if there was someone else that needed to join, she would need to notify me so I can keep an eye on it. You should also cover the identity of the client or household. So clearly before discussing the ins and outs of your program and any eligibility, make sure that you are talking with the right person. So in our particular example, Samantha reached out to our agency and so in the full intake clip that will be available, we started a part of our conversation with her confirming her name and date of birth so I could make sure I was talking with the right person.

We also confirmed that the topics that would be discussed, especially the sensitive information so that Samantha wouldn't be surprised when certain topics particular around HIV came up on part of our call. So she also would be surprised, we confirmed that if anyone else from the agency or anyone else from her household might be joining the call or might be in the background. That way no one was surprised if anyone showed up on the screen. And finally, we also discussed any goals or limitations of the call. So as we keep mentioning, we told Samantha that we would not be determined HOPWA eligibility right at that moment. However, we'd be collecting some information to assess her eligibility.

At the end of our intake, we did schedule a second follow-up call that was going to be held the next day where I could share her eligibility and then immediately go into her eligibility for HOPWA TBRA. So we took that moment to make sure Samantha knew during this intake that she wouldn't have all the answers she needed because we need some time. But we did let her know that she would get all the information she needed pretty quickly to make sure that she and her family stay housed. Any special confidentiality considerations you'd like to add Heather?

Heather Rhoda: No. I think those were covered well.

Steve Ellis: So when we go through different methods of remote methods, we're going to break these up to different types. So the first we're going to discuss is videoconferencing. So it's obvious that videoconferencing is pretty personally interactive throughout the entire method. Because you're able to have a face-to-face conversation, it's almost like your meeting with the applicant or an assisted household in person. So through this method, you can provide the applicant or household with the information that they need and asked them information that you'll need for an intake, an initial, an annual whatever that might be. And as well as be able to, in that moment, explain any follow-up that might be needed whether that's by mail or email.

Confirm those follow-up methods with the client and then circle back at the end of the conversation. So as we mentioned before make sure during any

remote method, particularly video conferencing that you might need additional information as a follow-up. Particularly around income assets, income deductions. We would recommend when you use videoconferencing to practice. So practice with a fellow staff member. Practice with another person in the agency that way you are used to all the confidentiality conversations. You're used to all the security features. You're used to what a screenshot might look like if that's what you choose to do. You are comfortable with all of the ins and outs before you practice or actually go through a conversation with a client.

You also want to make sure to set the pace for your videoconference. You don't want to go too fast that the client feels uncomfortable or you're missing information. But you also don't want to go too slow and that the conversation drags out. It would be key particularly when using videoconferencing to make sure this is something that the household is able to do. So while many people have technology such as a tablet or smartphone that they might be able to use videoconferencing, not everyone does. And so you should inquire that video conferencing is even feasible for your conversations. This would be important...especially important for intakes or initial conversations. Because you want to use videoconferencing for clients that you may not know or may not be fully aware of yet.

So if you haven't met a client, you're going through the intake videoconferencing would be important, but that may not be possible. Make sure if you are can use videoconferencing that all devices are fully charged. Any conversation could take a period of time and you don't want your battery to die on you midway through any conversations. And finally, as always be mindful of confidentiality. So on top of the points we just covered, it's worth remembering that this is live and so you're going to be discussing protected information and voices can travel. So if someone is going to be on their computer microphone and speakers, or their cell phone microphone and speakers, and so others could hear.

Alright, so be mindful of what you say and how loud you are. Be mindful of your background, particularly at the agency level to make sure there's nothing identifying for your organizations that can tip anyone off that you are an HIV or HOPWA funded agency. Once again, find out who if anyone else may be present in the conversation or may join later. That way you could be mindful of where conversations might need to shift or change. And finally, as part of any confidentiality policy an agency should have, but particularly when using videoconferencing, make sure to refer your program is a pseudonym if your actual agency name does identify you as an HIV or HOPWA funded agency. So if anyone does overhear, you don't reveal information about the client. Anything you'd like to add Heather?

Heather Rhoda: Just an additional comment under referring to a program under a pseudonym. This evening extends to...and I think in one of the videos or elsewhere in the

presentation we talk about making sure information that you're mailing to potential applicants or current program participants as you're working on doing more initial and annual recertification or intakes remotely, make sure your envelopes in any letterhead is also titled with that pseudonym and doesn't call out that your HOPWA provider or an organization that serves only people who are HIV-positive or have an AIDS diagnosis.

Steve Ellis

Steve:

And as a reminder, videoconferencing can be a really great remote tool to have conversations, but be mindful of those conversations that this might be something that you really want to require the best of your ability for new applicants or new households so that you can try to meet someone face-to-face. You might try to require video conferencing for more sensitive conversations, say when you go through a rental calculation. That way you can read someone's face if they understand what you're explaining. Or for sensitive conversations with case management. So just be mindful of videoconferencing and it could be the best tool for particular conversations.

When videoconferencing isn't available or in conjunction with videoconferencing, there's always the telephone or texting. So phone conversations can also be interactive as you're able to ask and answer questions. But texting definitely isn't as interactive or personal as any of the other methods. So phone or text will likely require additional follow-up, especially to get the physical documentation that you're going to need for your file. So telephone conversation or texting would probably not be suitable for new households, or to have sensitive, or important conversations. If you do use the telephone or text to communicate with a client, you'll want to consider is always who else might be present. That way you can ask if continuing a call is okay.

So we've all had a telephone call with clients that you hear a different voice in the background. So it's the same idea as just checking with that client, is anyone else home? Could anyone else come home? And do we need to stop the conversation if that happens? As part of any follow-up, make sure to discuss safe and confidential ways to send documents, especially if they're going to send it via texting. So make sure that if someone's going to take a picture of documents and send it to you, that it's going to come directly to you. That they know they can send it to you directly. That you can confirm that you received it, and also what you're going to do with any documentation once you receive it. Are you going to save an electronic file? Are you going to print it and delete it from your cell phone? These are all things that you should be mindful of and explain to the client as part of any remote method.

Finally, as part of any remote method or in conjunction with these two, there's obviously email or mail. So this is also not interactive, but it's very useful to obtain documents and/or signatures. So as we mentioned earlier, hard signatures are not a requirement or the HOPWA program, but they can be very useful in making sure that clients have seen certain paperwork. Seen

certain policies and understand those policies. So if you are going to use mail to get any documentation or send any documentation out, particularly if you're going to need something back, we would recommend sending a self-addressed stamped return envelope with any paperwork. That way you have a much better chance of getting everything back, so postage isn't a barrier for the client.

If you're going to use these methods, remember as always to discuss safe and confidential ways to send these source documents especially via email. If you're able to walk a client through on how to save an electronic document and particularly the password protected. That way if it gets emailed, there's less chance of anyone being able to open it if it goes to the wrong recipient. Make sure your email address is secure and confidential. Make sure the email address comes directly to you and not anyone else in your agency. As Heather had mentioned about mail, but the same can work for email. Make sure that you're referring to everything about your agency as a pseudonym so that if anyone receives the mail at the client household besides the client, you don't reveal any information that should be revealed.

Same for any emails. So if they go to the wrong person or received by the wrong person, someone's confidential information is still protected. And finally, something to really be mindful of as I don't think we think of it a lot, but always if you're going to use email, check-in with the household. With the client to see if anyone else is going to be using that same email address. So there are people and households out there that have a common email address or everyone has access to an email address. So you definitely don't want to send confidential information that might reveal health information through an email address that others could see. Heather, is there anything you'd like to add about telephone, text, email, or mail?

Heather Rhoda: No. I think you touched on all the key elements.

Steve Ellis: As we begin to end our slide for today, let's talk quickly about how do you plan for and implement any and all remote methods. As always, for remote methods or for any of the waiver flexibilities offered by HUD or HOPWA, make sure to notify HUD of your use. If you look at some of the additional information at the end of this PowerPoint, you'll see there's information on who to contact to notify individuals of your intent to use any of these waivers. As always if you are going to implement any remote methods, make sure to review and update your current policies and procedures to talk about the use of these remote methods. Whether you're going to use them for case management, for intake, for initials, for interims, for annual, all of that should be part of your policies and procedures.

Now, this does not mean that you need to totally rewrite your entire policies and procedures manual to include remote methods. You can just develop and write an addendum to your current manual to discuss any changes that are

occurring due to COVID-19, due to the Cares Act, due to any local health emergencies. We are currently working on and we'll soon release the guide to assist you in updating your policies and procedures for remote methods. So make sure to look at that when available to assist you with those. When using remote methods, make sure to train all relevant HOPWA program staff.

So any of your housing workers, any staff that might be working with other housing activity such as TBRA, your case managers. Everyone should be aware of how to use these particular to protect confidentiality and to be comfortable so that the client feels comfortable. Make sure to assess the current type of technology you have on hand and see if any upgrades are needed whether in hardware or software. These costs are eligible under the HOPWA program. The cost of upgrading or purchasing any technologies. So if those are things that you need to carry this out, make sure to look into that and to document accordingly.

Finally, we can't stress this enough. If you are going to use remote methods and you are changing your policies and procedures, please make sure to communicate that with the community. So talk about these changes and the use of remote methods with landlords, with assisted households, and community partners so that way everyone's aware that the hard work and the necessary work that you do for the HOPWA program is going to continue even through any local health emergencies. With that, let's see if there's any questions.

Heather Rhoda:

Yes. There were some that I have answered. So I'm just going to mention a couple of those in case everybody hasn't seen them. One question was about with new medications, people become non-progressors. Do they still need annual HIV proof? And the response to that is that HUD does not require annual verification of HIV status. Someone's HIV status unlike some income, household income, the HIV positive status is not going to change. If they're HIV positive, they're going to be HIV positive So there is no annual requirement. It could be that that might be a locally imposed requirement, but it's not a HUD requirement.

There is a question about...oh, okay. Remember in this slide we talked about verification...obtaining HIV status verification and how you can use other credible evidence. And then you know you have to obtain follow-up documentation within three months after the pandemic or public health directive restrictions are lifted. And there was a mention that as long as...and I'm paraphrasing. As long as grantees and project sponsors are doing their due diligence, and documenting everything in the client file, and they accepted credible evidence in good faith that it clients are later found ineligible, the clients should not have to pay back. The question is, would the program have to pay back? The grantee or project sponsor. Rita from OHH is going to take that question.

Rita Harcrow: So like you said, the client would not have to pay back and there's different ways that scenario can happen. I can imagine having worked with clients and it can be they thought they had documentation and didn't or maybe never had it. So there's different scenarios there. But if you as the program are acting in good faith, you have documentation on what you did know from them. What caused you to think that they were likely eligible. And also that you have given notice that you're applying that waiver. So that's an important piece that you're applying a waiver that exempts you from requiring that kind of documentation. Then you've acted in good faith and would not be liable for those costs.

Heather Rhoda: Do we want to talk about the Ryan White card question a little bit more or ask some information about it? For example, remember we were talking about different forms of other credible information? Other credible evidence to verify HIV status if someone asks if a Ryan White card could be used to verify that. And I'm going to say, I don't know what a Ryan White card looks like. So I can't answer that. So I'm going to defer to HUD on that one. Or if we need the parking lot that one too for additional research, we can do that also. Because there are sometimes we might...questions may be a little nuanced and we kind of parking lot them and then we take all the unanswered questions and drop them and come up with responses and then send them out to all the attendees within a couple of weeks after the webinar.

Rita Harcrow: This is Rita again. I mean, I'll try to answer. But without a little more information, I think it's challenging. So we don't know exactly what is a Ryan White card. What your organization's relationship is with the Ryan White program. Is it something you would scan? Be able to see the information? Does it have a name on it or something that would provide enough information? So I think it would depend on the situation. Typically though, if someone can verify that they're receiving services from a Ryan White provider, then that is enough. Because that means that their status has already been verified. So in general, that's a yes. But as far as what a Ryan White card would indicate, that might be something that you could consider...if it's hard to tell, if it's linked to the person requesting and receiving services from HOPWA, then it might be adequate for the waiver type of documentation until you can get something more appropriate. But again, I think there's just some nuances there that are not quite clear.

Heather Rhoda: Thank you.

Steve Ellis: There seems to be a few questions around HIV documentation and I think it's that similar idea around what you might accept to do an initial assessment. That initial waiver might be different than what you follow-up with and have in the file. So that anything you have in the file is very apparent to someone who maybe isn't medically trained to someone who isn't aware of potential benefits, that they can look at a piece of paper or look at a piece of documentation and know that someone is in fact diagnosed with HIV.

Regardless of maybe their viral load or anything like that. Alright, so just keep in mind that that follow-up documentation whatever that is in the file needs to be clear to that untrained eye.

- Rita Harcrow: Steve, I'll just follow-up with that to say that, as a reminder, what we're trying to do with the waiver and in consideration of the pandemic, I mean, we're all struggling and doing the best we can and that's the expectation for you right now as well. So use your best judgment. Try to get as much information as you can and deliver services where it's possible given the circumstances were all in. At some point, we will return to that other expectation and we can talk more about that when that time comes. So thanks.
- Heather Rhoda: Question. If somebody wants to take this. What if a client exited from the program and returned at a later date? Do we still need HIV verification?
- Ben Ayers: This is Ben. I mean, if you can identify that it's the same exact person, then you already have HIV verification for that person. You could just put a copy of it in the file.
- Heather Rhoda: So I think too that some of these questions could be related to local requirements about obtaining any kind of documentation. But in this instance, it's specifically on HIV. So there's definitely a difference and a flexibility that the waivers are allowing you to do. But even beyond that generally, HIV verification going back to the annual...like doing annual recertification and HUD if you want to chime in too, obtaining HIV verification on an annual basis is not a HUD requirement. I'll take that as yes. Agreed. Here's a question. Should agencies have the confidentiality agreement that clients can virtually sign and keep in the file, or is only verbal okay? Somebody would like to take that?
- Rita Harcrow: This is Rita. I'll give it a shot. So again, I think the more validated form that you can get the better. So if you have a standard confidentiality form that you have in place and you have a methodology to get that signed that is better, if you do not have access to that and can get a verbalize agreement and document that, that would be a second-best option.
- Heather Rhoda: Okay, I'm looking for other questions. Let me see.
- Steve Ellis: Here's a question. So someone asked if you determine eligibility visually, are you able to move on with the process for assistance? And then coupled with that, what if you verify virtually but the client fails to submit that follow-up documentation? So right so as we had talked about it, it's going to depend on what you have done as part of the eligibility process. If you've seen the documentation through some sort of remote method, then you can definitely move on to providing assistance. Because you've seen it, you know it exists.

So I mean, you can feel more comfortable with moving on. As we had mentioned earlier, that doesn't mean right away in the moment. You need to go ahead and calculate annual income. We would recommend potentially just taking that breather that way you can make sure that you collected all the information you need to adequately determine if the household is eligible for HOPWA. And then we had talked about if someone doesn't submit that proof and you haven't seen it, then at a certain point, that household is no longer considered eligible for HOPWA what until you do get the HIV documentation in the file.

Heather Rhoda: Thank you. There was a question regarding income. One of my absolute favorite topics, annual income and calculate rent. And I'm just going to briefly review it. It said, please review the information about the Social Security income for children. So if a household has in it a family member who is a minor, and that minor 17 years of age or under is receiving Social Security survivor benefits or Social Security income for disability, that Social Security income must be included in the total household, that totals family annual income. There's some good information about income inclusions and exclusions in the HOPWA rental assistance guidebook. Which is available on the HUD Exchange.

Ben Ayers: Is there...sorry this is Ben. I think there might be a couple a HOPWA Institute questions up online about calculating income. Just wanted to give a call out to you as well Heather and the TA team that they're currently working on a grant curriculum that will hopefully be out there at least by I want to say beginning, middle of next year. So you should have some additional tools on this coming your way.

Heather Rhoda: That's a good point, Ben. Sorry, I forgot about that. But if you also go to the HUD Exchange and you look up information about the 2017 HOPWA Institute, there is a video training and it's called Rent Calculation in 25 Minutes, which provides a high-level overview about determining annual income, calculating income, and what income is, and isn't included. So that's another resource. I think too, now we're going to pause on the questions. So we apologize if we didn't get everybody's questions. But we will make sure that we do gather them up together and draft responses and then make sure all the attendees are provided with that information. I don't know Steve, Morgan if you want to review the resources, reminders, and more reminders, and more reminders at the end of this presentation.

Steve Ellis: So if you need more information, we always recommend that people stay informed. So one of the great ways to stay informed and up-to-date is the HUD Exchange. All things HOPWA, all things HOPWA, and COVID-19, and these flexibilities will end up on the HUD Exchange particularly if you're on the mailing list. So a great example is this recording, the transcript, the videos, and even the webinar we did last time about virtual inspections which came up as a few questions. All of that will end up on the HUD Exchange for

you to watch and to review. So make sure that you are signed up for the HUD Exchange mailing list. So you'll see the links there as we mentioned because you weren't able to download it this presentation from today. We will email it out as soon as we're finished, so you will have all of these live links available to you.

Heather Rhoda: Next slide.

Steve Ellis: Trying.

Heather Rhoda: Oh, okay. Sorry.

Steve Ellis: Because we're talking about remote methods it's taking...time. Any other topic, it would not have this issue. So these are the resources that you've all seen and know, but we want to remind people of them. So these links are on HOPWA guidance. Both waivers. You'll have the hyperlinks too. The CPD director contact information, so if you do plan on utilizing these waivers as a reminder, grantees are the ones who should be notifying HUD of the use of the waivers. If you're a project sponsor listening, please talk to your grantee about this for any questions that might come up.

You'll also see some information resources around other topics that we've talked about, particularly the HOPWA on notice and IDIS set up. Also, for those of you who aren't aware of one of the greatest HOPWA resources out there, the Ask A Question Desk. So if you have questions about the HOPWA program, notice anything that was implemented COVID-19, the Cares Act funding, anything we've discussed, please submit a HOPWA AAQ through the portal. We love seeing those questions and following up with people.

Finally, HOPWA grantees, if you do need additional assistance in implementing any of these waivers or implementing any of your Cares Act funds, there is technical assistance available. The link is there for those grantees who wish to seek such assistance. A final reminder of the coming attractions. So next Wednesday, September 2 from 2:00 to 3:00, we'll have another HOPWA Cares Act and COVID webinar on supportive services. So please look for the HUD Exchange email to sign up and for more information on that. With that, Morgan do you want to close this out?

Heather Rhoda: I'd just like to make one more comment. And as always, as you can see from this experience alone, if you're going to be using certain types of video technology with your clients and working with them remotely, even though we did do this, I promise you we practice, and practice, and practice everything was working great. Make sure you give yourself some time to set up and practice, and then you have the right platforms and the computer bandwidth. Able to do that. Because obviously, things happen and technology can be a little quirky sometimes. Thank you.

Morgan Stevenson: Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Heather. Yeah, I just wanted to thank everyone again for taking the time today. We hope it was helpful to you. And we do apologize again about the technical difficulties for those of you who had a hard time seeing videos and then for the discrepancies with the video showing on the second video. But again as Steve said, these sides will be emailed right after we close up here. So if you're registered, you'll get a copy of this. And everything will be posted on the HUD Exchange. This webinar as well as the other ones we've done before along with any videos that were a part of it and the handouts. And if we didn't get to your question, thank you so much for submitting them today, and don't panic. We will follow up with those offline as well. So thank you again so much for your time. Good luck and have a great rest of your day.

Heather Rhoda: Thank you, everybody. Bye-bye.

Steve Ellis: Thank you, everyone. Be well.