



TO: Child and Family Health Collaborative of Ohio

FROM: Jana Pearce, Bridges Program Administrator

SUBJECT: **Bridges Age Termination Guidance during COVID-19 Pandemic**

DATE: April 24, 2020

On March 9, 2020, Governor DeWine issued Executive Order 2020-01D which declared a state of emergency in Ohio due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, orders were issued by the Ohio Department of Health's Director impacting schools, businesses, and child care facilities in addition to a stay at home order.

The impact of the pandemic poses particular challenges for transition-age youth. In effort to ensure safety and stability for Bridges participants, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) wants to ensure young adults are not aging out of Bridges without secure plans in place to meet their health and safety needs during this critical time. Providing an option for young adults to maintain stability and safety is a priority. Participants who have reached age 21 since March 9, 2020 will now be able to remain in Bridges through June 30, 2020.

At this time, Health and Human Services (HHS) has not extended Title IV-E for this population. To support the cost of care, ODJFS is temporarily expanding flexibility of Bridges funding. Effective March 9, 2020 and through June 30, 2020, this funding may be used to cover maintenance and administrative costs needed to support individuals who remain in the Bridges program beyond their 21st birthday.