NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Behavioral Health/IDD Day Program and Facility-Based Crisis Guidance
April 23, 2020

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) has been working in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies and Governor Cooper's Novel Coronavirus Task Force to prepare North Carolina for a possible coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. On March 10,2020, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 116 declaring a state of emergency in North Carolina as a result of COVID-19.

In light of the spread of COVID-19 in North Carolina, NCDHHS Divisions of Health Service Regulation (DHSR), Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDSAS), and the Division of Public Health (DPH) are providing additional guidance to facilities that serve people with behavioral health needs and intellectual disabilities to help improve infection control practices and to prevent the spread of the virus.

Guidance

This guidance is intended to help agencies that provide facility-based services, such as day program, day/night programs, day activity, day treatment, psychosocial rehabilitation, facility-based crisis etc. Facilities should monitor the NCDHHS and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) websites for information and resources. **They should contact their local health department if they have questions or suspect a participant attending their program has COVID-19.** Per the CDC, prompt detection, triage, and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is essential to prevent unnecessary exposures among participants, facility staff, and visitors at the facility. Therefore, facilities should continue to be vigilant in identifying any possible infected individuals. Facilities should consider frequent monitoring for potential symptoms of respiratory infection as needed throughout the day. Furthermore, we encourage facilities to take advantage of resources that have been made available by CDC and DHSR to train and prepare staff to improve infection control and prevention practices. Lastly, facilities should maintain communication with participants, their family, and/or legal representatives, and understand their individual needs.

Facilities should create a written plan that is suitable to services provided at the facility and their participants' abilities that focus on symptom screening, social distancing, hand hygiene and cough etiquette. The plan should

- Describe actions the program or facility is taking to protect participants/patients and personnel
- Describe actions participants and personnel can take to protect themselves in the facility
- Describe actions in case the program or facility needs to close

- Describe actions and specific steps to be taken if a participant needs to be quarantined in the facility or temporarily at the program until individual can go home
- Steps facility or program will take when accepting new admissions during the COVID19 pandemic
- Steps facility will take when discharging participants from the facility or program

Timely and transparent communication with participants, families, guardians, local health departments and other stakeholders is necessary to successfully prepare for and manage the ongoing pandemic situation.

The importance of social distancing, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, and source control (different measures used to keep the source of an infection from spreading the disease) should be emphasized. These strategies are outlined in this guidance.

Prevention and Control Strategies

Social Distancing
Social distancing, also called "physical distancing," means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice social or physical distancing:

- ✓ Stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people
  - Maintain social distancing by staying 6 feet away from others as clinically appropriate. To support with visualizing this distance, consider utilizing tape on the floor so individuals and staff can see the noted distance requirements.
- ✓ Do not gather in groups of more than 10 people and set chairs at least 6 feet apart. This may necessitate changing how you schedule participants or conduct facility-based programming.
- ✓ Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings

COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for a prolonged period. Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19, hence the importance of physical distancing, as well as, the other measures discussed below.

Hand Hygiene
Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals. One of the reasons hand hygiene is critical is that COVID-19 is thought to be able to survive on surfaces for approximately 72 hours. Therefore, if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes, **without washing your hands** there is the possibility to become infected with the virus.

Follow these five steps every time:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Use hand sanitizer when you can't use soap and water.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

How to use hand sanitizer:

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Considering the population, the facility supports, post signs throughout the facility with simply worded messages and/or pictures reminding individuals to maintain social distances and wash hands frequently. Remind individuals about the importance of these verbally throughout the day.

Cough Etiquette

The following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for all individuals with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Use in the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use.
- Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic handwash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Cloth Face Coverings

CDC recommends that people wear a cloth face covering to cover their nose and mouth in the community setting. This is to protect people around you if you are infected but do not have symptoms. A cloth face covering should be worn whenever people are in a community setting, especially in situations where you may be near people. **These face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing.** Cloth face coverings are especially important to wear in public in areas of widespread COVID-19 illness.

Wearing cloth face coverings is an additional public health measure people should take to reduce the spread of COVID-19. CDC still recommends that you stay at least 6 feet away from other people (social distancing), frequent hand cleaning and other everyday preventive actions. A cloth face covering is not

intended to protect the wearer, but it may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others. This would be especially important if someone is infected but does not have symptoms.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance. Surgical masks and N95 respirators are in short supply and should be reserved for healthcare workers or other medical first responders, as recommended by CDC guidance.

Key Steps to Managing COVID-19

1) Keep COVID-19 from entering the facility

Designate one or more facility employees to actively screen all participants and personnel for the presence of fever and symptoms of COVID-19, as well as, exposure to someone with known COVID19, such as someone they live with, before starting each shift/when they enter the building.

- Encourage guardians/transportation to wait until screening is complete and it is safe to enter the facility.

Send participants and personnel home if they are ill or have a fever of 100.0°F or greater.

Ill personnel should be prioritized for testing. Contact your local health department.

Implement sick leave policies that are flexible and non-punitive.

Personnel who work in multiple locations may pose higher risk and should be encouraged to tell facilities if they have had exposure to other facilities with recognized COVID-19 cases.

2) Implement recommended infection prevention and control practices

Provide access to alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60-95% alcohol throughout the facility and keep sinks stocked with soap and paper towels.

Ensure adequate cleaning and disinfection supplies are available. Provide EPA-registered disposable disinfectant wipes so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down. Routinely (at least once per day, if possible) clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched in common areas.

This may include cleaning surfaces and objects not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g., door handles, faucets, toilet handles, light switches, elevator buttons, handrails, countertops, chairs, tables, remote controls, shared electronic equipment, and shared exercise equipment).

Use regular cleaners, according to the directions on the label. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time).

Review all activities, including dining, to accommodate social distancing while dining.

Work to implement social distancing among clients. Social distancing means people remain at least 6 feet apart to limit potential for transmission.

3) Rapidly identify and properly respond to clients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Designate one or more facility employees to ensure all clients have been asked at least daily about fever and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., sore throat, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath).

Have a plan in place to isolate the ill participants until he/she can go home.

4) Return to Facility criteria for clients and staff
Remain away from the facility until

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, which is defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms should be excluded from the facility until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

If an individual had COVID-19 ruled out and has an alternate diagnosis (e.g., tested positive for influenza), criteria for return to the facility should be based on that diagnosis.

Resources
Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Guidance for Childcare Programs that Remain Open - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html

Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html

Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 (Interim Guidance) - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html

COVID-19 Guidance for Behavioral Health Residential Facilities - https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/covid-19-guidance-for-behavioral-health-residential-facilities/

When and How to Wash Your Hands - https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html