

Interim Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Home and Community-Based Care Providers including family members Published April 1, 2020

The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread through respiratory droplets, close personal contact, and contact with mucous membranes. Providers of home and community-based services, including licensed home care agencies, licensed hospices, and providers of services covered under the Department of Health and Human Services' recently submitted Temporary Policy Modifications for 1915 Waivers (Appendix K), need to implement precautions to protect themselves and consumers from COVID-19. The Department recognizes that "providers" also includes family members, whether paid or unpaid, who are the principal caregivers of the consumer, and that caregiving occurs whether consumer receives formal services or not. This guidance is intended to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 to providers and consumers and patients and to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Some of the people served through the system may have co-occurring conditions that put them in one of the high-risk groups for COVID-19. Individuals 65 and older, as well as people with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, chronic lung disease and chronic heart disease, or a compromised immune system (e.g., cancer, cancer treatment, or other immunosuppressant treatments) have a greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Special precautions should be taken with these populations to ensure that they are not exposed to the virus.

Preventing transmission of respiratory pathogens in home and community-based settings requires adherence with, and application of, strong infection prevention practices and policies including environmental and engineering controls, administrative controls, safer work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE). Successful implementation of many, if not all, of these strategies is dependent on the presence of clear communication, administrative policies, and organizational leadership that promote and facilitate adherence to these recommendations among the various people involved with the care of the consumer, including patients or consumers themselves, family members, direct care personnel, and other staff.

What The Arc of the Triangle Support Professionals Need to Do:

1. Direct Support Professionals (DSP) will screen participants for symptoms of respiratory illness and possible exposures.

- Via phone, Staff will call the participant/family prior to the visit.
- Ask if the consumer or anyone in the home has symptoms of COVID-19 (see below) or if the consumer has had close contact with a patient diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days. **If they answer yes to any of these questions, reschedule the visit or use telehealth as appropriate. If needed, assist participants with symptoms of COVID-19 in calling their medical provider.**

Per the www.CDC.gov ask about the following symptoms. If speaking to the participant you may need to use more descriptive words.

Do you have a fever or do you feel hot?
Do you feel cold? Are you shaking?
Do your muscles feel sore, achy or hurt?
Does your head or throat hurt?
Have you been coughing?
Can you smell or taste things?
Are you feeling ok or bad?

- If applicable, report any reported symptoms to the family or participant's legal guardian immediately if participant lives independently (if they do not live in the same home) so arrangements can be made for a diagnosis.
 - Report to The Arc immediately via the On-Call phone number
2. Staff are to self-screen (this could be fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, cough, or new loss of taste or smell)
 - If you do not feel well report this to The Arc by calling On-Call 919-457-1533, stay home and call your doctor.
 3. If you are already on shift and you don't feel well, call On-Call to notify us you need to go home and so arrangements can be made for your participant's health and safety. Bring and use personal protective equipment (PPE) found in issued First Aid Kits
 - ❖ The Arc of the Triangle has ordered masks from several distributors and are waiting on receipt. We will notify staff and families as soon as we can make these new kits available. Update 04/30/2020
 - Each staff will
 - wear a facial mask while on duty
 - wear gloves
 - regularly wash hands or use hand sanitizer (if soap and water are not available)
 - follow universal precautions and
 - when supplies are available, use enhanced surface cleaning in the environments you work (homes, in the community and at their place of employment)

The Arc will issue new augmented First Aid kits that include a facial mask(s), hand sanitizer, and gloves in addition to band aids and alcohol wipes and The Arc will supply replacement items in each office location.

In case of exposure to COVID-19:

- If you have been exposed to COVID-19, next steps depend on the level of risk involved. Consult the CDC risk assessment guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html> for healthcare personnel to determine appropriate actions.
- If a family/caregiver may have been exposed to COVID-19, the following additional guidelines may minimize risk of other family members or caregiver themselves becoming sick:
 - the person should stay in a separate bedroom from others if possible;
 - ideally only one caregiver should assist ill person while they are ill;
 - PPE should be used by caregiver, and a face mask by consumer if available, during caregiving.
 - the condition of the participant should be monitored for worsening symptoms following guidance of the individual's primary care provider.
 - The room the infected individual is staying in should be kept well ventilated and surfaces cleaned.

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/covid19>
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Finfection-control%2Fcontrol-recommendations.html