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ADVANCE CARE ALLIANCE



## GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR OUR MEMBERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

Reopening Services and Supports In New York State (NYS) for Individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

On July 16th, 2020 OPWDD finalized Interim Guidance Regarding Reopening of Day Services. This document provides guidelines for OPWDD's certified programs to resume operations safely and consistently with the Governor's NY Forward initiative. OPWDD is committed to resuming full access to services for individuals, as well as to maintaining health and safety standards, social distancing directives, and precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19. This guidance was distributed with the caveat that programs may only reopen if they meet the minimum State and Federal safety requirements as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), New York State Department of Health (DOH) and OPWDD, while also meeting the minimum standards of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The NYS Governor's office has started developing policies for reopening services provided to the I/DD community. These services include Day Habilitation, Prevocational Services, Day Treatment and Respite, and guidelines for visitation to Residential Programs. The purpose of this document is to inform people supported through ACA/NY, and their family members, of updated guidance. This will allow Care Managers to support informed decision making as you, or your loved one, prepare to return to programming while maintaining health and safety standards.

As programs prepare to re-open it is imperative that the service system is focused on a person-centered approach. This model promotes

- The health and well-being of the I/DD community
- Special consideration for health and safety measures
- Discretion and flexibility to choose a preferred medium of service delivery
- Location of service delivery
- Comfort level of each person involved in service delivery.

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, feedback from our members and their families have raised concerns regarding key areas to consider prior to, and during, the reopening of programming. These concerns include, but are not limited to the following

- How OPWDD programs will maintain safety and infection control
- Determining how services will be delivered
- Frequency of service delivery
- Implications of COVID-19 on members in Self-Direction
- Transparency of provider organizations
- The behavioral health impact that the closure of New York State has had on I/DD community.

### **What does this mean?**

OPWDD Programs must develop a safety plan for reopening that addresses the requirements contained within the guidance presented by OPWDD. The plan of approval must be submitted to OPWDD **prior** to any certified Day Program from being allowed to reopen\*.

**\* Willowbrook Class Members: For those individuals that CAB fully represents, co-represents, safety plans will also need to be reviewed and approved by CAB/Plaintiff's Attorneys in addition to OPWDD. If there are class members who self-advocate/consent or family members who consent to returning to site-based day programs/pre-vocational, CAB and Plaintiff's Attorneys will speak with them directly to review the safety plans. However, no class members should be returning to site-based day programs/pre-vocational until approval is received by CAB and/or Plaintiff's Attorneys.**

Plans must be developed by day program, residential and community habilitation settings with the following criteria:

- How social distancing will occur across all program aspects, including transportation.
- The use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including necessary parameters for the use of PPE.

Programs are encouraged, with support and feedback from you and your loved ones, to determine the circumstances to provide the safest level of support. This may include offering flexibility regarding when you, or your loved one, return to site-based services or continuing to receive services using tele-health.

Protocols to be implemented are:

- Screening prior to entry to any certified site for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 while on site.
- A mechanism to inform staff, members and families of possible exposure.

Day Programs must implement these protocols:

- Designate a site safety monitor for continuous compliance with all aspects of the site's safety plan.
- Maintain a log of all people who enter the site.
- Performing hand hygiene immediately upon entry to a Day Program.

Signage must be clearly displayed indicating ways to stop the spread of germs. This includes:

- Washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home if you are sick.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
- Wearing a mask or face covering when social distancing is not possible in public.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing it in the trash.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces

For our members who now wish to return home, OPWDD has implemented guidance to ensure their safe return. The following conditions must be met for you, or your loved one's, safe return:

- No known or suspected cases of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding the member's return.
- The member must have no known contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- The member, or caregiver, must confirm in writing that they did not display symptoms of COVID-19 in the 14 days prior to their return.

As NYS continues its phased reopening, residential providers may resume community outings and low risk activities while ensuring that specific conditions are met to prevent further community spread or increased risk of infection. Low risk activities include going to

- A medical or professional service appointment
- Work
- Community outings to the extent permitted by NY Forward

### **Our Promise to You**

ACA/NY is working in collaboration with service providers to inform the people we support about the many changes occurring in the OPWDD service system. Amidst these challenging and rapidly evolving times, it is critical we collaborate with the I/DD community and service providers to provide clear communication and feedback to our governing bodies. Care Managers will continue to work closely with the members' care planning team, including his/her day programming provider, to have all necessary discussions about members supported and their specific health and safety needs to support his/her return to day programming. We are also taking precautions to ensure that our worksites follow all health and safety guidelines set forth by NYS with a focus on social distancing, use of PPE, and minimizing in-person contact unless situations are deemed urgent by program administration. The health and safety of the people we support is paramount, and we are committed to continuing to provide support and services to all our members.

For additional information and resources please visit:

### **Signage Guidance**

[https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/13067\\_coronavirus\\_protectyourself\\_poster\\_042020.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/13067_coronavirus_protectyourself_poster_042020.pdf)

### **Interim Guidance Regarding Community Outings for Individuals Residing in OPWDD Certified Residential Facilities**

[https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/07/7.10.2020-opwdd\\_covid19\\_communityoutings-final\\_1.pdf](https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/07/7.10.2020-opwdd_covid19_communityoutings-final_1.pdf)

### **Reintroduction of Individuals to Certified Residences After Extended Home Visits**

[https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/07/7.10.2020-opwdd\\_covid19\\_returntohomeextendedstay-final\\_0.pdf](https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/07/7.10.2020-opwdd_covid19_returntohomeextendedstay-final_0.pdf)

### **Interim Guidance Regarding the Reopening of Day Services Certified by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities**

[https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/07/reopening-day-programs\\_revised\\_7.16.20.pdf](https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/07/reopening-day-programs_revised_7.16.20.pdf)