



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

March 11, 2020

Dear Individuals, Families and Guardians,

Yesterday, March 10, 2020 Governor Lamont declared public health and civil preparedness emergencies in Connecticut.

These emergency declarations give the state the authority to provide necessary measures to prepare for and contain the outbreak of COVID- 19 (also known as the coronavirus) in Connecticut.

The Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) highest priority is the health and safety of the individuals we support.

To this end, DDS is beginning to communicate guidance to all providers that implements preparedness efforts and potential outbreak management. To review this guidance and any other communication transmitted to our providers please visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/DDS/OperationsCenter/Providers/Communications>.

Specifically, DDS is implementing steps that may briefly interfere with the daily routine of the individuals we support. Please understand that these decisions were made with the health and safety of you and your loved ones in mind and were not made lightly.

DDS guidance includes:

- Any DDS day or employment program congregating 100 or more people at one location throughout a single day cease operation until further notice. This includes any scenario in which a provider congregates 100 or more people in one area (e.g. organizing for transportation out of one main site).
- Providers of day and employment programs supporting fewer than 100 people in a single day may choose to cease operation until further notice.
- Residential providers should use their discretion when determining whether individuals should attend a day or employment program supporting fewer than 100 people (if the program is still running). Providers and individuals' teams should consider an individual's medical status and age, as well as whether they are displaying cold or flu-like symptoms.
- DDS is reviewing alternatives to in-person gatherings for IP meetings and Level of Need assessments. Additional guidance on this topic will be forthcoming.

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- DDS will stop all public respite center services until further notice. If you or a loved one are scheduled for a visit to a public respite center in the next four weeks, please begin to make alternative plans. DDS will continue to work with these families directly on details. For questions regarding respite centers please contact your region or case manager directly.
- Specific to families and individuals that self-direct, it is important that everyone has a backup plan and you discuss this plan with your Planning and Support Team (PST).
 - If you live independently - make sure you have a plan if for any reason your staff/direct support professionals are unable to provide services.
 - For family – if you or one of your family members becomes ill, make sure you have a plan in place to support your family/personal needs.
 - For family/individual with home health agency (HHA) support – talk to your HHA to make sure you know what plan is in place if you or your family member becomes ill.
- DDS is reviewing the ability for case-managers to continue in-home visits and are looking at teleconference options. Additional guidance is forthcoming.

For general information and statewide updates related to COVID-19 please visit:

<https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>

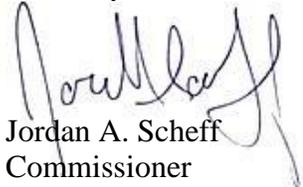
DDS urges everyone to take simple preventative measures to keep healthy:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands.
- Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should call their healthcare provider.

DDS continues to work with the administration, our sister state agencies, federal partners and our network of providers on all preparedness effort and will continue to communicate any statewide and agency-based updates as they become available.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner
Department of Developmental Services