



## Update: Home and Community-Based Services Regarding COVID-19

Updated June 18, 2020

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*This document provides agencies and organizations with information about home and community-based services as it relates to COVID-19. This document is an update to the March 16, 2020 guidance titled “Interim Guidance for Home Care Services Regarding COVID-19”.*

### **Important Information About How COVID-19 Spreads**

- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
  - Respiratory droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, however, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic.
- Spread of the virus is possible 48 hours before people show symptoms; some individuals with COVID-19 may not show any symptoms.

### **Considerations About Your Agency’s Services**

- If it is critical that this service be provided now, can this service be done remotely (e.g., phone call, video conference)?
- If NO, then staff should call ahead and ask the clients or family members, if applicable, the questions in the algorithm in **Appendix A**.

### **Strategies to Prevent Spread of Infection**

- Implement daily health screenings for staff: Home care services staff experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, exposed in the last 14 days to a COVID-19 positive individual, testing positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or experiencing a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0° F, should not enter a client’s home or the workplace. Staff who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should stay home, contact their health care provider, and [find a](#)

[local testing site for diagnostic testing](#). Information about when staff, who had symptoms of COVID-19 or had a COVID-19 test that was positive, can return to work are outlined in the May 31, 2020 "[Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure](#)".

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Consistent with directives from Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, including Executive Orders 202.16 and 202.17, as subsequently extended, the NYS Department of Health requires the wearing of a face covering when unable to maintain social distance. Executive Order 202.16, issued on April 12, 2020, further provides: "For all essential businesses or entities, any employees who are present in the workplace shall be provided and shall wear face coverings when in direct contact with customers or members of the public." Individuals are required to wear a face covering in situations and settings where social distance of 6 feet is not possible. Face coverings are not required if wearing one would inhibit or otherwise impair an individual's health. Children under the age of two are not required to wear a face covering. Staff should work with their agency to obtain PPE. If agencies have questions about PPE, they should contact the local health department.

- Hand Hygiene: Home care services providers should perform frequent hand hygiene. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after all individual contact, after contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and after removing PPE, including facemask and gloves. Hand hygiene after removing PPE is particularly important, to get rid of any germs that might have been transferred to bare hands during the removal process. If soap and water are not immediately available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, may be used. Please note, soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- Maintain physical distance: To the greatest extent possible, a physical distance of at least 6 feet should be maintained when inside the home. If the services being delivered do not allow for physical distance, PPE should be used and good hand hygiene must be practiced.

### **Guard Against Stigma**

Organizations should work to prevent actions that could perpetuate stigma attached to COVID-19. There is no excuse for using the outbreak as a way to spread racism and discrimination. Organizations should encourage that staff stay informed, remain vigilant and take care of each other.

**More information is Available at:**

NYS Department of Health Novel Coronavirus hotline: **1-888-364-3065.**

New York State Department of Health's COVID-19 Webpage:

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

Local Health Departments Contact Information:

[https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact\\_information/index.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/index.htm)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Webpage:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>