



July 10, 2020

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

On March 24, 2020, the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities' (OPWDD) issued "COVID-19: Suspension of Community Outings and Home Visitation". That guidance document is hereby rescinded and replaced with the following guidance related to community outings.

Effective July 15, 2020 for regions of the State that have entered into Phase Four in accordance the New York Forward Reopening Plan, community outings may resume for individuals living within OPWDD certified residential facilities. Furthermore, individuals may resume low risk activities, such as going to medical or professional service appointments and work, and participating in community-based outings, as described below, to the extent permitted by NY Forward, and consistent with the restrictions of this guidance and all applicable NYS directives.

### **A. Interim Restrictions for Community Outings from Certified Residential Facilities**

In order to prevent further community spread or increased risk of infection, residential providers shall ensure that the following conditions are met:

- Individuals shall not participate in community outings if any individual or staff member working in the home is suspected or confirmed positive for COVID-19;
- Any person who had close or proximate contact to a confirmed positive individual within the last 14 days, or any person experiencing symptom(s) consistent with COVID-19, such as cough, fever, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, chills, muscle pain, new or worsening headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell must not participate in a community outing. Individuals that are close or proximate contacts or experiencing symptom(s) consistent with COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider or local health department for recommended next steps;
- The number of individuals permitted in a community outing shall be within the discretion of the facility, based on the ability to maintain safety, but should be as small as possible. Groups shall include no more than 10 people inclusive of staff members and should be cohorted with individuals in regular contact (e.g. roommates or housemates);
- Low risk, outdoor activities are encouraged whenever possible;
- Community outings to stores, outdoor restaurants, salons, etc., should be extremely limited in frequency and duration and must abide by the capacity limitations of such locations;
- Planned recreational community outings should be limited to one location per day for any individual participating;
- Hands should be washed/sanitized immediately prior to leaving the home and immediately upon return to the home;

- Staff must bring hand sanitizer and ensure all individuals are washing and/or sanitizing hands throughout the community outing, whenever surfaces such as door handles, counters, public benches, and store shelves are touched;
- Social distancing principles must be adhered to, to the greatest extent possible;
- Face coverings shall be brought on public outings and individuals must be encouraged to wear the covering at all times. Everyone who is medically able to tolerate a mask must wear one when unable to maintain social distancing;
- There should be no unnecessary interaction with other members of the public while on a community outing; and
- When planning outings, staff should be aware of various capacity restrictions for businesses and should consider calling ahead, where possible, to ensure group size can be accommodated

Individuals who participate in community outings without staff present must be provided with hand sanitizer and a face covering and should understand the risks and obligations of public exposure, as well as the expectations regarding reporting as outlined below.

#### **B. Interim Transportation Requirements for Community Outings**

Community outings requiring transportation to and from a location should be implemented on a limited basis and only when providers of certified residential facilities can ensure that all infection control and mitigation strategies will be applied during the transportation of individuals to and from community outings. The following measures will be required in order to transport individuals for community outings:

- Only individuals and staff from the same facility should be transported together. Individuals or staff from other residences should not be intermingled for purposes of transportation;
- Capacity on buses, vans, and other vehicles should be reduced to 50% of total capacity to maximize social distancing and reduce COVID-19 transmission risks;
- To the greatest extent possible, individuals and staff should restrict close contact by not sitting near each other or the driver. The use of directional tape and signage can assist in accomplishing this. Additionally, if there are multiple doors in a bus or van, one-way entering and exiting should be utilized. Individuals should be directed to not exit the vehicle at once, instead following driver or staff instruction on exiting one person at a time;
- To the extent individuals can medically tolerate a face covering, individuals, staff, and the driver must wear face coverings at all times in the vehicle. Staff who cannot medically tolerate the use of a face covering should not be assigned to transport individuals;
- After each trip is completed, the interior of the vehicle should be thoroughly sanitized and disinfected before additional individuals are transported.
- Where appropriate and safe, windows should be rolled down to permit air flow.

### **C. Interim Documentation Requirements for Community Outings**

In order to be able to sufficiently trace and track any potential COVID-19 exposure, in addition to the requirements set forth above, providers are required to maintain a daily log of all community outings from the home. Logs must contain the following information:

- The names of all individuals and staff members who participate in each community outing throughout the day;
- Confirmation that each person passed the daily health screen and temperature check, per OPWDD's April 28, 2020 guidance, "Revised Staff Guidance for the Management of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Facilities or Programs Operated and/or Certified by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities", available at [https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/06/6.12.2020-opwdd\\_covid19\\_staffguidance\\_updated-symptoms.pdf](https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/06/6.12.2020-opwdd_covid19_staffguidance_updated-symptoms.pdf), and any successor thereto;
- The location, including address, where the community outing occurred;
- The times the outing started and ended;
- The transportation that was used for each outing, where applicable; and
- Any additional notes that are relevant or may inform increased precaution on future outings. These logs may be required to be produced to OPWDD at any time.

### **D. Additional Safety Information, Guidelines, and Resources Available**

New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>

New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) Website  
<https://opwdd.ny.gov/coronavirus-guidance>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>