



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
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**To:** DDS Providers

**From:** Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner

**Cc:** Peter Mason, Deputy Commissioner; Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff; Scott McWilliams, Chief Fiscal Officer; David David, Director of Service Development and Support; Valencia Bagby-Young, Director of Health & Clinical Services

**Date:** May 8, 2020

**RE:** Updates and Extensions related to COVID-19

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In an effort to provide ongoing updates regarding statewide management efforts for COVID-19, this memo summarizes guidance and provides further updates for all Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) qualified providers.

The state is currently planning to reopen certain services and establishments on May 20, 2020. This reopening will largely **not** affect the guidance currently governing DDS services and supports. Given the nature of the services provided and the individuals supported, DDS will maintain limited participation in this first phase of reopening. Below is an updated list of the guidance for our system.

### **Residential Providers**

#### **Visitation Ban-Extended**

- DDS has **issued a second extension on the visitation ban** in all residential facilities for persons with intellectual disability and facilities overseen by DDS. Pursuant to this guidance, effective May 14, 2020 this ban will extend for a period of an additional 30 days, unless otherwise directed.
- Providers may develop alternative methods of connection for individuals and families, as determined on a case-by-case basis. Methods may include use of technology, or, depending upon the review and approval of the provider, supervised perimeter visits (i.e. window visits, outdoor social-distancing visits) in which social distancing and PPE requirements are followed. Families are required to bring and utilize their own face coverings, respect all social distancing guidelines and any additional requirements as communicated by the provider.

## **Employment and Day Providers**

### **Congregate Settings**

- At this time, DDS will continue to require that all congregate employment and day cease site operation until further notice. Certain exceptions were outlined in the [March 27, 2020](#) and [April 15, 2020](#) memos.
- Please note: services may still be provided to individuals enrolled in these congregate settings. Please see the memos above and other guidance available on the website for details.

### **Group Day and Individual Supported Employment (ISE) supports**

- At this time, DDS will continue to allow individual and group supported employment (ISE/GSE) settings to continue for those community employment sites that are considered essential or those settings in which the individuals would be risking their jobs if they did not report to work.
- At this time, DDS will allow individuals' teams to determine whether an individual can safely resume their supported employment if their employer is reopening under guidance from the state.
- Please refer to the [March 27, 2020](#) and [April 15, 2020](#) memos for more information on transportation and group size guidance.

### **Day Program Staff**

- As a reminder, day providers are to deploy staff whenever possible to provide in-home/alternate individualized supports to individuals who live in their own home or with a caregiver or a Community Companion Home provider who provides essential services.

### **General**

- DDS is encouraging families and individuals who are graduating this year to continue to explore post graduate services and providers.
- DDS will be conducting provider and family surveys to solicit feedback on needs and suggestions around further reopening of day and employment supports.
- DDS will be conducting virtual work groups with providers to solicit more in-depth feedback and conversations around reopening.
- DDS will be using this and public health information to develop guidelines and frameworks for providers to use in planning for reopening. Providers will likely be asked to develop and submit plans within the context of this guidance. Information on this process is forthcoming.
- DDS will facilitate regular contact with day and employment providers to answer questions and support conversation between providers on best practices, creative and innovative models, and individualizing services.

### **Trainings**

- At this time, all current extensions are still in place:
  - All Med Certs expiring 3/1-6/1 have been extended for 90 days.
  - PMT recerts have been extended by six months.
  - CPR refresher courses are suspended and not required
  - All other mandatory trainings have been extended by 90 days
- Additional information is forthcoming on remote training options that may become available.

## **PPE**

### **PPE Usage**

- DDS continues to follow CDC and DPH guidance indicating that all staff in direct care settings should be wearing a mask. Considering PPE shortages, employees may be advised to reuse traditionally disposable face masks. Please refer to the [April 3, 2020 memo](#) regarding PPE Guidance for more information.

### **PPE Requests**

- Beginning the week of May 11, 2020, DDS will be issuing a two-week supply of surgical masks and gloves to all providers. DDS anticipates placing orders to continue this process moving forward and will confirm for future rounds of distribution, as supplies are made available to the department.
- For all other types of PPE and for emergency situations, providers should continue to use the request process. For more information please refer to the [April 6, 2020 memo](#) on the process to request PPE from DDS. To request supplies online please visit [https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-nyLEd2juUiwJjH\\_abtzi0jZnob8UlpCjbyyDVIZkk5UMzdRMVdLQzIZQ1IHMDFTUzBIOVNEQzZGMCOIQCN0PWcu](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-nyLEd2juUiwJjH_abtzi0jZnob8UlpCjbyyDVIZkk5UMzdRMVdLQzIZQ1IHMDFTUzBIOVNEQzZGMCOIQCN0PWcu)

### **DDS Case Management**

- DDS case managers will continue to work with individuals and families to convene Individual Plans via tele-conference. Extensions may be issued based on case manager evaluation.
- All quality service reviews, initial intake visits, and other service coordination visits continue to be suspended. However, tasks that require face-to-face visits to ensure health and safety will continue. These tasks include well-care visits and immediate protective service orders.
- Individuals and families experiencing COVID-19 related support challenges should continue to work through their case manager to request assistance.

### **Other Updates**

#### **Respite Centers**

- All DDS respite centers will remain closed until June 30, 2020.

#### **NCI, QSR and Licensing**

- All routine NCI, QSR and Licensing visits remain suspended.
- POCs have been extended by 90 days.
- Additional information is forthcoming on remote licensing visits.

#### **Dental Clinics**

- All scheduled, elective, routine and non-urgent dental services in DDS dental clinics remain cancelled until further notice.

#### **General**

- At this time, all other specific guidance remains as issued in its original form, unless stated otherwise in this memo.

As we move into the summer, we will continue to review public health guidance to determine the appropriate next steps. Any decisions we make related to the phased reopening of the state will be carefully considered and implemented with the health and safety of the individuals we support in mind.

DDS will continue to provide any updates and information and guidance regarding COVID-19 with individuals, families and providers. To review all DDS communications please visit the DDS homepage at <https://portal.ct.gov/DDS> under “COVID-19 Updates for DDS Individuals and Families” and “COVID-19 Updates for DDS Providers.” Please email [DDS.COVID19@ct.gov](mailto:DDS.COVID19@ct.gov) with any questions.

Thank you.