

**Medicaid Members Who Self-Direct**

**2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance**

*March 19, 2020*

***Intended Audience:*** *Individuals who self-hire and self-direct services.*

***Special Note:*** *The term “individual” is used throughout this document to refer to individuals receiving services, with the acknowledgement that different programs use different terms.*

This guidance is based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of 2019 novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). The Connecticut Department of Public Health is working closely with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide updated information about the COVID-19 outbreak.

This guidance will be updated as needed and as additional information is available. Please regularly check https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus for updated interim guidance.

## Background

**What is Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)** and **how does it spread?**

* COVID-19 is a respiratory virus. Current symptoms have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever cough, and difficulty breathing.
* According to CDC, the virus is spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with each other (within about 6 feet).
* Spread is from respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

**Who should be most cautious?**

* Those considered “high risk” include people over the age of 60, anyone with underlying health conditions or a weakened immune system, and pregnant women.

**What should you be doing to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19?**

* **Screen yourself and your personal care attendants (PCAs) for any of the conditions below daily:**
* Sick with fever (Higher than 100.3 oF) or newly developed respiratory illness such as cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat
  + Recent international travel (i.e., within the past 14 days) from [COVID-19-affected geographic areas](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html)
  + Close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days
* **Avoid unnecessary out of state or international travel and avoid large gatherings or crowds.** 
  + You should try to limit travel as much as possible to limit possible contact with the virus. You also need to know if your PCA is following this rule so that they don’t transmit the virus to you.
  + Cancel or do not attend large gatherings (greater than 250 people).
* **Practice good hygiene daily.**
  + Remind your PCA to wash his or her hands when they arrive at your home and when they leave.
  + Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially:
    - After going to the bathroom;
    - Before eating;
    - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; and
  + If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
  + Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue and dispose of tissue.
  + Don’t touch your eyes, nose or mouth without first carefully washing your hands.
  + Properly clean all frequently touched surfaces on a regular basis using everyday [cleaning products](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf).
  + Avoid sharing dishes, drinking glasses, eating utensils, or towels.
  + Wash dirty dishes in a dishwasher or, if by hand, with warm water and soap.
  + Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine with warm water. It is not necessary to separate laundry used by individuals who are ill from other household laundry.
  + In order to avoid germs, do not shake dirty laundry or “hug” dirty laundry to your chest to carry it.
* **Monitor your own emotional health.**
  + Emotional reactions to stressful situations such as new viruses are expected. Remind yourself that feeling sad, anxious, overwhelmed, or having trouble sleeping or other symptoms of distress is normal.
  + If symptoms become worse, last longer than a month, or you struggle to participate in your usual daily activities, reach out for support and help.
  + The national Disaster Distress Helpline is available with 24/7 emotional support and crisis counseling for anyone experiencing distress or other mental health concerns. Calls (1-800-985-5990) and texts (text TalkWithUs to 66746) are answered by trained counselors who will listen to your concerns, explore coping and other available supports, and offer referrals to community resources for follow-up care and support.

## Steps to follow if you, or someone you know or care for is sick

* **If you are sick:**
  + Call your health care provider for further guidance.
  + Be prepared with face masks.
  + Follow the steps outlined on page 3.
* **If your PCA is sick, they should not work for you until they feel well.**
* **Follow the flow chart on page 3 to determine the best care path if you or your PCA is diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing symptoms.**
* **If you live with a sick individual some general guidance includes:**
  + Keeping the sick person in a separate, well-ventilated room and apart from other people and pets.
  + If a separate space is not available, keeping a distance of at least six feet from people who are well.
  + A sick person who is coughing or sneezing should wear a mask when around other people. If the sick person cannot wear a mask, the caregiver should wear a mask.
  + Providing the sick person with a separate bathroom if available and a trash bag within reach. The bathroom should be cleaned every day using a household disinfectant according to the directions on the label. Wear gloves while cleaning.
  + Limiting activities outside the home until the sick person is feeling well for at least one day.
  + Limiting outside visitors.

**Self-Direction Screening Flow Chart**

**Start Here**

**If you answered Yes to ANY of these questions:**

**If you answered No to ALL of these questions:**

**REVIEW YOUR EMERGENCY BACK-UP PLAN FOR STAFF AND HAVE IT READY. IF YOU NEED HELP, CALL YOUR CASE MANAGER OR ASSESSMENT AGENCY**

**Complete the following self-check screening every day by asking:**

1. Do I have fever (Higher than 100.3 degrees) or new respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
2. Have I travelled to a [COVID-19-affected area](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html) (outside of U.S.) in the past 14 days?
3. Have I had close contact with a person (live with or are within 6 ft. of for over 15 minutes) diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
4. Have I been diagnosed with COVID-19 or told by a healthcare provider that I may or do have COVID-19?

**If the PCA answered Yes to ANY of these questions your PCA should not continue to work for you for 14 days or until they are cleared by their health care provider. You should encourage the PCA to call their health care provider and follow the provider’s guidance. Activate your back-up plan**

Your **PCA is at risk of spreading disease** if they work for someone else who becomes ill. If the PCA works for someone else who becomes ill, they should only provide care to you if they **wear a face mask and gloves.**

**You should call your health care provider and follow the provider’s guidance.** Ask your PCA to help you, if necessary.

**If you are sick and your health care advisor tells you to stay home, you should protect your PCA while they work for you using the following strategies:**

* **Having a face mask for your PCA to wear;**
* **Having gloves for your PCA to wear when touching you;**
* **Maintaining personal hygiene**

You should also wear a mask while you are sick, if you live with others.

If you are uncertain about how to contact your case manager or assessment agency, you should choose the number below that is closest to where you live:

Eastern CT:1-860 885-2960

Northeast CT:1-860 589-6226

Northwest CT 1-:800-870-1852

Western CT:1-203 465-1000

Southwest CT:1-203 333-9288

South Central CT:1-203 752-3040

If you are in an emergency, call 9-1-1

**Is your PCA working for anyone else who answered yes to the screening questions**

**YES**

**YES**

**NO**

**NO**

**NO**

**Complete the following PCA check screening every day by asking*:***

1. Has a fever (Higher than 100.3 degrees) or new respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
2. Has travelled to a [COVID-19-affected area](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html) (outside of U.S.) in the past 14 days?
3. Has had contact with a person (live with or are within 6 ft. of for over 15 minutes) diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
4. Has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or told by a healthcare provider that they may or do have COVID-19?

**Your PCA should continue to support you**, using strategies of prevention including:

* Washing your hands often with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
* Covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze, using a tissue or the inside of your elbow
* Limiting physical contact with the individual to only what is needed for care tasks

**Perform a self-check screening and screening for your PCA every day.**

**YES**