



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services


DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

To: DDS Providers

From: Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner 

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

Date: March 2, 2020

RE: Provider COOP Plans and COVID-19 Preparedness

The State of Connecticut and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) are working to prepare for and respond to a potential outbreak of COVID-19 (also known as the coronavirus).

There are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Connecticut as of the date of this letter. However, planning for an outbreak is critical to maintaining the supports necessary to ensure the health and safety of individuals with intellectual disability.

As part of the statewide emergency response planning efforts, all state agencies have been instructed to update their Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP). To this end, **Commissioner Scheff is also requiring all qualified providers of DDS to update their own COOP and submit a copy to Deb Lynch of the Operation Center, at Debra.Lynch@ct.gov, no later than Friday, March 13, 2020.**

As a reminder, the purpose of the COOP is to ensure that an agency maintains supports and services to individuals during a statewide health crisis. A COOP should detail the following:

- the critical services necessary to continue direct care supports;
- implementation strategies to continue providing these critical functions;
- the resource requirements associated with such functions;
- the succession strategies when an agency reaches its critical mass and can no longer ensure the safety of the consumers and maintain a line of communication between the agency and DDS.

As providers begin to review and update their COOPs, the following items should be evaluated and completed, when appropriate, as part of the process:

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- The provider should estimate the type and amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) needed for a potential outbreak; current PPE should be inventoried; supplies should be ordered and kept up to date. DDS is reviewing funding mechanisms for these supplies.
- The provider should ensure medicines are up to date and there is enough non-perishable food in the home, in case staff and individuals are unable to leave the house for a number of days.
- Communications systems for maintaining a flow of information to the provider's staff and state administrators during an outbreak should be developed and tested.
- Assistive technology equipment that can be used to more efficiently utilize direct support during an outbreak should be reviewed for each individual and, if appropriate, approved by the individual's team.
- Electronic face-to-face supports should be evaluated for individuals living in their own apartment and reviewed by the individual's team.
- Protocols for telework by administrative staff should be reviewed and, if necessary, updated.

State agency leaders are in constant communication with the administration regarding preparedness. At this time, the state is urging all residents to [follow all precautions and guidelines issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#). For providers, if an individual you serve develops respiratory or gastrointestinal viral symptoms please have them evaluated by the person's primary care provider or another community health care provider as soon as possible.

DDS will continue to communicate any statewide or agency specific updates as they become available.

Please contact David David, David.David@ct.gov, with any questions.