

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2020

Connecticut Department of Developmental Services

Contact: Krista Ostaszewski

Krista.Ostaszewski@ct.gov

(860) 250-8454 (cell)

Department of Developmental Services Provides Update on COVID-19

Hartford, CT- To date, the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has nine (9) individuals receiving residential services in DDS public settings who have tested positive for COVID-19. Sadly, DDS recently learned earlier today that one of those individuals, a man from the Torrington facility, has passed.

“My deepest condolences to the family and everyone affected by this terrible tragedy” said DDS Commissioner Jordan Scheff. “In these difficult moments we must all come together; as family, as staff, as providers and friends, to all support one another.”

The families and guardians of the individuals that have tested positive have been notified.

DDS has also released that three (3) staff in DDS public settings have tested positive for COVID-19. DDS is conducting contact tracing and the staff are no longer reporting to work.

“We wish everyone a quick and full recovery” said DDS Commissioner Jordan Scheff. “DDS continues to remain in constant communication with the individuals we support, our staff and our network of providers on decisions and information related to COVID-19. We are committed to streamlining services and ensuring continuity of care, while maintaining the health and safety of everyone we support during this extraordinarily challenging time.”

DDS has taken significant steps to protect the health and safety of individuals and staff. These steps include:

- Implementing health screening protocols for all DDS staff entering public support facilities.
- Restricting visitors for all DDS congregate residential settings.
- Adjusting supports and services to promote social distancing by offering telehealth and telecommunication options.
- Approving over 630 DDS employees for telework to promote social distancing and minimize exposure to individuals and staff at DDS public settings,
- Continuing with regular and deep cleaning schedules in all DDS public settings and administrative offices; and
- Implementing appropriate safety measures, as determined in consultation with the Department of Public Health, for staff who are symptomatic or have been in close contact with individuals suspected of or having COVID-19.

Pursuant to Connecticut state law Chapters 319, 368 and 813, pertaining to individuals receiving supports and services from DDS, and other HIPAA, state and federal privacy laws, no additional information about these individuals or staff is available.

DDS has over 17,000 individuals with intellectual disability that are eligible to receive supports and services through public and private providers. DDS public operates 37 community living arrangements, 3 regional centers and Southbury Training School, serving over 450 individuals.

###