



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON, Ph.D.
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

To: DMHAS Private Non-Profit Providers
From: Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.
Date: March 24, 2021
Subject: DMHAS COVID-19 Provider Update #24

We have just passed the one-year anniversary of the date that the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic. It has been a long and difficult year with significant loss of life along with the loss of many of our everyday routines. Many families have lost loved ones and are dealing with that grief. Others have experienced loss of work, and isolation from being unable to see relatives, friends, and classmates. However, we have seen positive signs lately where case numbers and hospitalizations have been decreasing while the number of individuals who have been vaccinated is increasing.

We now have 3 approved vaccines and the President recently announced that he believed that all Americans would be eligible to receive the vaccine by May 1st. Connecticut continues to expand eligibility for the vaccine, making it available to individuals between the ages of 45 to 54 beginning last Friday, March 19th. All Connecticut citizens over the age of 16 will become eligible starting April 5th. The increased access to vaccines may be raising questions and concerns for your staff and clients as they grapple with decisions related to being vaccinated. I wanted to use this Provide Update to focus on resources for your staff and clients related to vaccinations.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 Vaccination Communications Toolkit

The CDC continues to be the best resource for information related to vaccinations. They have a comprehensive array of information designed to help increase vaccine confidence among the general public. These resources are continually being updated in order to reflect the evolving knowledge base. Their communication toolkit can be used to help build confidence about the vaccine among staff and clients you serve. The Toolkit includes a comprehensive array of communication materials that educate staff about the vaccine and provide them with tools to educate patients and answer questions they may have about the vaccine. The Communications Toolkit can be found at the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/toolkits/index.html>

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Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) Vaccination Portal

DPH maintains a number of resources for the general public related to COVID-19 vaccination. These resources can be found at the link below:

<https://portal.ct.gov/vaccine-portal/>

This resource has information about eligibility, how to schedule a vaccination, vaccine safety, and information that addresses common questions and concerns people may have about getting the vaccine. More specific information regarding vaccination can be found at the following link:

<https://portal.ct.gov/vaccine-portal/COVID-19-Vaccination-Phases>

Eastern Isolation Site Extension

This item is not related to vaccinations but I felt it may be of benefit to providers. I sent out a notice last week that DMHAS has expanded the eastern isolation site that was launched on January 4th to include all DMHAS-operated/funded programs and Residential Care Homes. Due to continued need, this resource will be available for COVID recovery through May 2021. Where on-site or community-based isolation is not feasible, this site is available and managed by the **New London Homeless Hospitality Center** in partnership with the **Alliance for Living**. The Norwich isolation site has 24-hour staffing, part-time nursing coverage and recovery navigators to help support isolation compliance. Providers can make a referral to the Norwich Isolation site by calling: **(860) 580-6800**. More detailed information about this resource can be found in the communication I previously sent out on March 17th.

It is my hope that the first two items in the update can increase staff confidence regarding vaccination. While I recognize that staff may have questions and concerns about getting vaccinated, it is my belief that getting the vaccine is the best way to protect ourselves, family members and our clients. I want to thank you and your staff for your continued support of our efforts to manage the virus. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at Miriam.Delphin-Rittmon@ct.gov or Deputy Commissioner Nancy Navarretta via email at Nancy.Navarretta@ct.gov.