



**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 Staff  
**From:** Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.  
**Date:** September 15, 2020  
**Subject:** DMHAS COVID-19 Staff Update #26

My last update highlighted the good work that we have done managing COVID-19 in our system. We aggressively worked to control the spread of the virus in our inpatient and residential facilities. We currently do not have any patients and only a small number of staff who have tested positive. As we move beyond Labor Day, I am reminded that we face new risks which require us to be even more vigilant. Many of you have children returning to school and you may be concerned about exposure to the virus. Experts are also warning us about the combination of the flu season and a second wave of the coronavirus. I felt that it was important to use this update to remind staff about the safety procedures that we must continue to adhere to in order to maintain our preventative efforts.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

DMHAS has worked throughout the summer to be build up our supply of PPE. DMHAS facilities are working to maintain a 90-day supply of masks and gowns so we are well positioned if another outbreak occurs. Guidelines for PPE use can be found at the following link on page 8 of the document:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DMHAS/COVID-19/Resources/DMHAS-Protocols-for-COVID-Q-and-I.pdf>

**Updated Mask Guidelines**

DMHAS has updated our guidelines related to masks. The update is related to concerns that patients in institutional settings could use masks to harm themselves. It simply indicates that ***“staff working on inpatient units should wear a surgical (or N95) mask. Hospitalized patients should be given surgical masks with ear loops with the metallic piece removed. Cloth masks should not be worn on inpatient units.”*** The revised guidelines can be found at the same link cited above:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DMHAS/COVID-19/Resources/DMHAS-Protocols-for-COVID-Q-and-I.pdf>

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## **General Hygiene**

As a reminder staff are encouraged to follow good hygiene practices. Simple things like social distancing, frequent handwashing and the use of masks have all been proven to slow the spread of coronavirus. Staff should continue to self-monitor each day for signs of infection; fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or GI symptoms. Similarly, staff should remember to *stay at home* if you are not feeling well and get tested if you are showing any symptoms of COVID-19. Finally, staff should take advantage of opportunities to get the flu shot early this year. DMHAS will have more information about flu clinics in the upcoming weeks.

## **Self-Quarantine Following Travel to States with High Infection Rates**

DMHAS continues to require that staff who travel to states with high rates of COVID quarantine upon their return. As a reminder the list of states continues to change based on the most recent data available. Staff should check the following link to know which states have been designated as one of these states: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Travel-In-or-Out-of-CT> . If you have questions about guidelines related to the self-quarantine, please contact your facility's Human resources representative.

In my last staff update, I indicated that we must remain vigilant. Our staff have done an excellent job controlling the virus and we must stay committed to the safety procedures we have initiated. I want to thank you for all you have done and encourage you to remain focused on all of our safety procedures. By doing this we remain ready to address any new clusters or hotspots that develop within our system.