



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: November 10, 2020
Subject: DMHAS COVID-19 Staff Update #27

It is clear that Connecticut and the nation are now entering another wave of the pandemic. Recently the State of Connecticut has begun to see increases in COVID-19 cases along with an increase in hospitalizations. On the national level we have seen record-breaking COVID-19 case numbers over the past few days. Our increases and those that are being observed nationally highlight the need for increased vigilance and a renewed focus on those practices that can slow the spread of the disease. Unfortunately, we have primarily begun to see increases in staff that have been diagnosed with the coronavirus. We remain focused on ensuring the safety of our patients and staff. I want to use this memo to remind our staff of resources that are available to help you better manage the pandemic. Thank you for all you are doing on behalf of our clients.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

DMHAS has worked throughout the summer to 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. This may be an important time to review our Guidelines for PPE use. These Guidelines have been updated and 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>

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 and has grown significantly 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

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have questions about guidelines related to the self-quarantine, please contact your facility's Human Resources representative.

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. It is more important than ever.

DPH New Public Health Advisory for Connecticut Residents

The state Department of Public Health has issued a new public health advisory in response to the growing number of COVID-19 cases in the state. The advisory was done in collaboration with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 9K which can be found at the following link:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-9K.pdf> . The Executive Order became effective last Friday.

Specifically, the Public Health Advisory recommends but does not mandate that:

- 1. Those over age 60, and anyone with a chronic disease or obesity who are at higher risk for complications of COVID-19 take extra precautions and limit non-essential trips outside your home;**
- 2. Employers allow work-from-home as much as possible;**
- 3. Non-essential social or community gatherings of any size for any reason (e.g., parties, community meetings, celebrations or other social events) end by 9:30 pm or otherwise be canceled or postponed at this time;**
- 4. Everyone maintain at least a six-foot distance from those who do not live with you;**
- 5. Everyone wear a mask whenever you leave home and wear a mask INSIDE your home if someone from outside your household is visiting;**
- 6. Everyone clean their hands frequently using soap and water, hand sanitizer, or isopropyl alcohol wipes. Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds works best. Avoid touching your face; and**
- 7. Families and loved ones should limit visitation to long term care facilities.**

Office of Policy Management (OPM) and Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Guidance Regarding Absences, Teleworking, and Schedule Changes

OPM and DAS jointly issued revised guidance for staff regarding absences, schedule changes and teleworking. The guidance can be found at the following link: <https://portal.ct.gov/->

</media/Coronavirus/20201029-COVID19-Guidance-regarding-absences-requests-for-telework-and-or-changes-in-work-schedules.pdf> .

Minor changes were made to this document relating to the following: updated the CDC definition of “close contact”, created a singular union e-mail for agencies reporting employees with COVID-19 and, revised a question related to travel and quarantine form adjacent states. Changes in the document have been identified through the use of yellow highlights.

It is important for all staff to take those steps to help maintain a safe and healthy work environment. To this point we have done an excellent job controlling the virus and we must stay committed to the safety procedures we have initiated. This is clearly a time when we must remain vigilant in order to protect our patients and each other. Please stay focused on all of our safety procedures. By doing this we can minimize new clusters or hotspots that may potentially develop within our system.