



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: April 3, 2020
Subject: DMHAS COVID-19 Staff Update #12

It is with great sadness that I am writing to let you know that we have had the first COVID-19 related client death. This morning we learned that a member of our behavioral health community who received outpatient services at one of our facilities has passed away. I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the client's family, friend and the staff who have served the client over the years. These are very difficult times and I know that the DMHAS community will pull together to support each other.

Since the first case of COVID-19 was announced last month in Connecticut, there have been nearly 5,000 laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 with over 900 hospitalizations and more than 100 deaths throughout the state. Sadly, public health experts anticipate a surge of COVID-19 cases over the next two weeks. Now, more than ever, it's important that we all practice social distancing, frequently wash our hands and surfaces, and stay home whenever possible to help minimize the spread of this disease.

Throughout our system of more than 100,000 clients and 3,500 employees, we are not an exception to the COVID-19 outbreak. To date, there have been 12 laboratory confirmed cases of individuals we serve in DMHAS inpatient units and 8 employees throughout the DMHAS system who have reported laboratory confirmation of COVID-19. As the outbreak progresses, we will continue to monitor the health of the people we serve as well as the staff to minimize exposure and maintain the health and security of our healthcare system.

Yesterday, Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown temporarily stopped admissions to its detox unit so that it could stand up an isolation unit for patients with COVID-19. The isolation unit will be staffed with a number of amazing volunteers and staff from the detox unit. We are so grateful for our volunteers who offered to work in the isolation unit during such a critical time, and for the staff who will be helping to care for those diagnosed with COVID-19..

Whiting Forensic Hospital staff have also done an outstanding job standing up and staffing an isolation unit for patients grappling with COVID-19 symptoms. I would like to thank all of our health care heroes across the DMHAS system. I would also like to say a special thanks to our

(860) 418-7000

410 Capitol Avenue, P.O. Box 341431, Hartford, Connecticut 06134

<https://portal.ct.gov/dmhas>

An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

direct care staff for their dedication and commitment to the people we serve during this difficult time.

As we do our best to practice social distancing and limiting face-to-face meetings, it's important that any virtual and online meetings are held securely to protect the integrity of our IT system. Many popular video conferencing websites and applications, including Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, Facebook Messenger and others, are deemed not secure and are not HIPAA compliant. As such, these websites and applications are not permitted for DMHAS use and should not be used for DMHAS purposes, on DMHAS-issued devices or on the DMHAS network. If you need help with your video conferencing solutions, please email MHAHelpDesk@ct.gov. If you have questions regarding privacy or confidentiality, please contact the DMHAS Director of Compliance and Integrity, Elizabeth Taylor, at Elizabeth.taylor@ct.gov.

Thank you so much for all that you are doing to support the behavioral health community during this crisis. The staff at DMHAS have, once again, shown their integrity, flexibility and strength. I am in awe of the wonderful DMHAS family we have.