



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 13, 2020
Subject: DMHAS COVID-19 Staff Update #14

Connecticut continues to make progress in our fight against the coronavirus. While confirmed cases continue to rise, the Governor has indicated that we are seeing some glimmers of hope. Hospitalizations are declining and it appears that social distancing and the simple act of frequent handwashing are helping to prevent the spread of this illness. Again, I want to thank you for all you are doing on behalf of the individuals we serve,

These uncertain times have raised a few questions about the steps DMHAS is taking to protect clients and staff. I remain committed to your health and safety, and continue to direct all facilities to follow guidance from the Department of Public Health (DPH) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) related to COVID-19 to maintain an environment that is healthy and safe for both the people we serve and the people who serve them. DMHAS continues to carefully monitor information from state and federal public health officials and to adapt our protocols to ensure they remain aligned with the recommendations set forth by the CDC and the DPH.

Our quarantine and isolation protocols have been reviewed and approved by the Department of Public Health. DMHAS quarantine and isolation methods are appropriate to the agency as evidenced by the minimal spread of the virus within our facilities. Each DMHAS-operated facility has identified spaces and developed isolation plans that can be implemented and changed as needed to address this evolving pandemic. Information on policies and procedures, Staff Updates, and resources for staff can be found at the following DMHAS link:
<https://portal.ct.gov/DMHAS/Newsworthy/News-Items/DMHAS-Response-to-COVID-19#staff>.

In [Staff Update #7](#), we dealt extensively with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and interactions with clients who may have Covid-19. It may be helpful to review that Update if you remain concerned about safety. In addition, DMHAS protocols relating to patient and staff exposure to COVID 19 and the use of PPE are posted on the link noted above. These protocols were updated on April 10th and continue to be widely distributed to DMHAS staff. Facility CEO's will be communicating frequently via established channels to ensure staff are aware of the protocols.

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The pandemic has also had a significant impact on our daily lives. I want to remind you all of the importance of self-care. We all know the importance of maintaining a routine and staying socially connected to others. While we must maintain physical distance from others, we must remain socially connected to others. Please continue to reach out to each other via telephone but remember that applications like Zoom have not been deemed safe for DMHAS use.

Your feelings of worry and concern during a time of such great uncertainty are normal. If you are finding yourself having a hard time coping with these changes or in need of support, I encourage you to reach out. I am also attaching a document that lists a variety of resources on the state and local level that may be of help to you. The document has been posted to the DMHAS COVID-19 webpage. I am continuing to include the resources below in memos as a way of reminding staff of the importance of self-care.

- State of CT Coronavirus Website Mental Health Resources:
<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Pages/Public-Health-Resources/Mental-Health-Resources>
- Solutions EAP: 1-800-526-3485
- Speak to a DMHAS chaplain at 860-999-1629 from 9am to 9pm

These times are extraordinarily difficult for all of us. Please remember your actions are helping to protect you, your colleagues, our clients, and your loved ones. Thanks once again you for all you do and please stay committed to helping yourselves and each other.