



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 20, 2020
Subject: DMHAS COVID-19 Staff Update #15

Every evening I see images on the news highlighting the heroic actions being taken across the country related to the COVID-19 virus. We have seen images of medical staff on the frontlines, individuals looking after elderly neighbors and volunteering to sew masks in an effort to protect workers. These acts of generosity and kindness, small and large, are hopeful examples of how we can have a positive influence during such a difficult and tragic time. I have been personally touched by spontaneous displays of support for healthcare workers and first responders. We have all seen these expressions of gratitude; singing in Italy, cheering for healthcare workers in New York at 7:00 pm each evening, and fire engines saluting medical staff outside of a hospital. As I think about our service system, I am keenly aware that “heroes work here”. I felt it was important to recognize how our own staff are performing heroic acts each day.

DMHAS staff are on the frontlines every day. Whether it is in one of our inpatient facilities, residential programs, or at a client’s home in the community, we are responsible to the individuals we serve. Many of these individuals are extremely vulnerable with complicated behavioral health and medical problems. Our staff have families and loved ones they are concerned about, yet they are coming to work each day providing support to our clients. I recognize that it is not easy to come to work while the fears and anxieties related to the virus swirl around us. Yet “heroes” across our system continue to provide comfort and care to our clients.

Throughout this crisis, I have been meeting with the state-operated CEO’s on a daily basis and they constantly highlight the good work you are doing. I have heard of how our staff have rolled-up their sleeves, doing things that do not typically fall within their job descriptions. As an example, employees have decided to make cloth masks for patients and co-workers as a way of extending our collective efforts to promote a safe working environment. This has been done at CMHC and RVS and is even more important now that Governor Lamont has requested that masks be worn in public.

I recognize that our staff and providers are making their contributions while being significantly impacted by the virus. Some of our patients and staff have contracted the virus and are in

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various stages of recovery. Some of you may have family members who have the coronavirus and others may have lost a loved one. I am aware that some members of our behavioral health community have passed away due to the virus. And yet, our staff continues to provide compassionate care to our clients.

Your work gives me hope as we work to fight this virus. I see hopeful signs as patients and staff recover from the virus and we begin to “flatten the curve”. I know **“heroes work here”** and I thank each and every one of you for your contributions