



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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Governor

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Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

**To:** DDS Leadership Team, DDS Regional Health Services Directors, DDS Qualified Providers  
**From:** Gloria Jones, Director of Health and Clinical Services  
**Date:** May 31, 2023  
**Re:** **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)  
Recommendations Regarding the End of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE)**

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May 11, 2023, marked the end of the U.S. Public Health Emergency. The following questions and answers may assist with understanding the impact of the end of the PHE on individuals served by DDS and employees.

**1. Are COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) vaccines required for individuals, nurses, direct care staff, residential staff and ICF-IID (intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities) staff?**

Staff Vaccination Requirements: On April 10, 2023, the President signed legislation that ended the COVID-19 national emergency. On May 11, 2023, the COVID-19 public health emergency expired.

On May 11, 2023, Governor Lamont announced that the public Health emergency declaration signed March 10, 2020 has ended and the COVID -19 will be managed by the Department of Public Health.

Although there are no vaccine requirements in ICF/IID's, vaccines are recommended.

<https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases>  
[COVID-19 Vaccines for Long-term Care Residents | CDC](#)

**2. Will the COVID-19 vaccine remain available for individuals and employees?**

Yes, the COVID-19 vaccines and boosters will remain available. Employees should check with their insurance carrier to determine coverage options. These vaccines also may be available through retail pharmacies. Please refer to the CT.gov vaccine portal website link to locate where to receive the COVID-19 vaccine or boosters. [https://portal.ct.gov/vaccine-portal/covid-19-vaccination-scheduling-options?language=en\\_US](https://portal.ct.gov/vaccine-portal/covid-19-vaccination-scheduling-options?language=en_US)

Regardless of where an individual or employee originally received their COVID-19 vaccine or booster, a licensed prescriber's order will now be required for a COVID-19 vaccine or booster and consent from an individual's legal representative or guardian may be necessary as well. Pharmacists who are authorized to prescribe certain medications and administer vaccines may be considered as authorized prescribers acting within their scope of practice.

**3. Is there a requirement for employees to wear a face mask?**

Mask wearing is optional but encouraged when there are high levels of respiratory viruses (e.g., COVID-19, influenza, etc.) in the community or any residential home or congregate setting or residences in which an individual has a compromised immune system (e.g., immunocompromised diagnosis, chemotherapy treatment, etc.).

**4. What support is available for intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IID) with regard to any COVID-19 outbreaks?**

The Department of Public Health (DPH) will continue to assist long-term care facilities, which include ICF/IID residences, in identifying and limiting any COVID-19 outbreaks.

**5. Are there any contraindications for Aerosol-Generating Procedures (AGP) in Day Program Settings?**

AGP's include any medical treatment that causes the production of uncontrolled respiratory secretions or aerosol from an individual's airway to be spread into the environment during or following the procedure. If the individual has no symptoms and has not tested positive for COVID-19, there would be no precautions needed. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), common AGP's include the following: nebulizer treatments, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), bilevel positive airway pressure (BiPAP), and open suctioning of the airway.

According to the CDC's infection prevention and control practices for individuals who are suspected or confirmed to be positive for the COVID-19 virus, any procedures that could generate infectious aerosols should be performed cautiously and avoided if appropriate alternatives exist.

The number of healthcare personnel and direct care workers present during the procedure should be limited to only those providing and assisting with the AGP support.

Please refer to the CDC's website link for updated AGP recommendations for healthcare personnel. [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html#:~:text=Aerosol%2DGenerating%20Procedures%20\(AGPs\)&text=AGPs%20should%20take%20place%20in,be%20present%20for%20the%20procedure.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html#:~:text=Aerosol%2DGenerating%20Procedures%20(AGPs)&text=AGPs%20should%20take%20place%20in,be%20present%20for%20the%20procedure.)

**6. Is testing for COVID-19 still available?**

**This link will direct you to available testing information.**  
[COVID-19 Testing: What You Need to Know | CDC](#)

**COVID-19 vaccine availability**

**Updates for vaccine availability are available on this link:**  
[Vaccines.gov - Find COVID-19 vaccine locations near you](#)

**7. How can individuals and employees who test positive for COVID-19 receive treatment?**

Access to COVID-19 treatments, such as Paxlovid and Lagevrio, will still be available from healthcare providers and retail pharmacies.

**References:**

**U.S. HHS Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Transition Roadmap**  
[Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Transition Roadmap | HHS.gov](#)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Vaccines.gov**  
<https://www.vaccines.gov/>

**Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) COVID-19 Surveillance After Expiration of the Public Health Emergency Declaration — United States, May 11, 2023**  
[https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7219e1.htm?s\\_mm7219e1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7219e1.htm?s_mm7219e1_w)

**Department of Public Health (DPH) COVID-19 2023 Update – Ending of the Public Health Emergency website**  
[COVID-19 2023 Update – Ending of the Public Health Emergency \(ct.gov\)](#)

**CDC End of the Federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) Declaration**  
[End of the Federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency \(PHE\) Declaration | CDC](#)