
Guidance for the Management of COVID-19 in New Mexico HCBS Residential Settings

The following are recommendations for providers of Home and Community Based Services to individuals with I/DD, including staff employed by community-based provider organizations.

These recommendations are adapted from New Mexico DDS Memorandums; the State of New York/OPWDD and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The guidelines outlined in this document are designed to minimize the risk for the transmission of COVID-19 from infected to non-infected persons. In addition, agencies and programs must ensure that staffing levels are maintained in accordance with agency/program requirements and based on the supervision needs of the individuals served.

Education for Individuals with I/DD and their Staff

Providers are also encouraged to educate their staff as well as the individuals they serve about COVID-19. Resources are listed here and on the last page.

For staff:

- New Mexico COVID-19 Resources <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>
- Corona Virus Info: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>
- [Preventing Spread of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>
- Hand hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/index.html>
- Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette:
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when caring for COVID-19 patients:
<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/ppe-sequence.pdf>
- Transmission Precautions See CDC guidance at
<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html>

For individuals with I/DD:

- Self-Advocacy Technical Assistance Resource Center information for self-advocates on Coronavirus <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/>
- Plain Language Video and Captioned from Oregon:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ8eeC-tVD4&feature=youtu.be>

Visitors are not permitted

Limiting visitors minimizes exposing persons with IDD to the virus that causes COVID-19. Agencies must support telehealth, phone or video interactions for clinical visits and trainings. These methods can also be used to offer socialization and visits with family and friends.

Staff Assignments and Monitoring Staff Health

1. Staff assignments into or out of residences that serve individuals who have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 should be limited by maintaining similar daily staff assignments to the extent possible.
2. Staff assignments into or out of sites that serve individuals who have a confirmed exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 should also be limited to the greatest extent possible.
3. Assignment of staff who support individuals with a confirmed exposure but who are asymptomatic (i.e. that staff has not had any *direct* contact with a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19), is permissible.
4. In the above example, if the individual with a confirmed exposure begins to show signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever over 100.4, cough or shortness of breath), those exposed staff should not be reassigned to other sites and should be tested.
5. Any staff member showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should be directed to stay home and seek testing. If the symptoms emerge while at work (fever over 100.4, cough or shortness of breath), they should be sent home and should be tested or seen immediately. Follow CDC guidelines for criteria related to returning to work.
6. Call the **NM Coronavirus Hotline at 1-855-600-3453** at any time for individuals or staff who are displaying signs of COVID-19.

Guidance for Staff When There Are Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in Any HCBS Residential Facility

The following steps are recommended when any individual living in an HCBS residential facility is identified as having a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19:

1. Assure that people who are sick or with suspected COVID_19 stay in their rooms as much as possible. Avoid group activities and communal dining. Offer activities for individuals in their rooms to the extent possible, such as video calls.
2. Keep individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 with dedicated health care and direct care providers. Minimize the number of staff entering individuals' rooms. Do not float staff between individuals to the extent possible.
3. Staff are required to monitor all individuals. At least once per shift, a symptom check on the persons status including symptoms, heart rate, respiratory rate and temperature check must be performed. The temperature information must be entered in Vitals Signs in the Health Tracker module in Therap. This will allow Provider Agency Nurses to monitor this crucial information remotely.
4. Notify the agency nurse of all changes as soon as possible. If the individual has a medical emergency (temperature over 100.4, coughing, shortness of breath, blue-ish color to the lips or fingernails): Call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that the individual is being evaluated for COVID-19. Complete the GER for COVID Reporting.
5. Other individuals living in the home should stay in another room or be separated from the sick individual as much as possible. Other individuals living in the home should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available. Thoroughly clean the home wiping down all surfaces a cleaning agents.
6. Perform "hand hygiene" frequently. Everyone should wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Washing with soap and water is preferred when hands are visibly dirty. When a sink is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Hand Sanitizer may not be available so wash with soap and water often.
7. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

7. Avoid sharing household items with the individual. Individuals should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the individual uses these items, wash them thoroughly.
8. Clean all “high-touch” surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
9. Use a household cleaning spray according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
10. Individuals should not handle pets or other animals while sick.
11. Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.
12. The sick individual should wear a facemask if possible when around other people. If the individual is not able to wear a facemask (for example, it is not available or because it causes trouble breathing or they get really upset), staff should wear a mask when in the same room as that individual.
13. If possible, staff should wear a disposable facemask and gloves when they touch or have contact with the individual’s blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine.
 - a. Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.
 - b. When removing personal protective equipment, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - c. There are shortages of Personal Protective Equipment. If medical masks or gowns are not available, cloth masks, aprons or other clothing protectors may need to be used and washed as soon as possible.

14. Wash laundry thoroughly.
 - a. Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
 - b. Staff should wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after removing your gloves.
 - c. Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, using a normal laundry detergent, wash and dry clothing thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.

15. Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after handling these items. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

16. Discuss any additional questions with your supervisor or assigned nursing staff, or contact the state health department or healthcare provider, as needed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

State of NM COVID-19 site: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

NM DDS COVID-19 site: <https://nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/diro/ddcv/>

CDC Coronavirus Information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

CDC Guidance on Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus in Homes and Residential Communities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>

Transmission Precautions: Infection Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html>

Hand hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/index.html> . See also <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/links-to-coronavirus-information-for-self-advocates/>.

Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette in a health care setting:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE is recommended when caring for COVID-19 patients, including gown, gloves, mask (or respirator), and eye protection:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/ppe-sequence.pdf>

Transmission Precautions See CDC guidance at

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html>

CDC Guidance for Businesses and Providers on

Coronavirus19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

NY State Coronavirus Site: <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>