



November 9, 2020

Dear Individuals Served, Families and Community Friends,

The Arc of Genesee Orleans, recognizes the importance of consistent and current communication with those served and their families. As an agency we monitor the CDC, OPWDD, Department of Health (New York Forward) and OMH websites for guidance in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We take guidance from our local health department to determine if someone is considered for a Risk Status, Quarantine Status or Tracking Status.

Each program has a safety plan that has been submitted to Office of People with Developmental Disabilities explaining the procedures each program is taking to ensure the health and safety of individuals in each specific program. We continue to communicate agency status in regards to COVID-19 with families and individuals served through the agency website, Facebook and in some cases a phone call or email.

If a staff person has been identified by having symptoms of COVID-19: the agency will send the person home and have them contact their doctor for further guidance. In the event that the health care provider requests COVID-19 testing, while the agency/person is waiting for the results to come back the staff member will not be working at an agency program.

In addition, each staff person that was determined to have had contact with that staff person will be notified and an assessment will be conducted to determine if additional testing is necessary. This directive will be done with guidance of the medical healthcare provider and/or Department of Health. This also includes individuals that the staff person may have come in contact with in the last 7 days from date of determination. The area that the staff person worked in, will be disinfected before other staff are allowed in that area.

If an individual that receives services is identified as showing signs of COVID-19, the individual's health care provider will be notified immediately. If testing is recommended, staff/family will be requested to take individual to get tested. While waiting for the test results to come back, the individual will not be allowed into any programs with the exception of residential if the individual lives in one of our homes.

For residential facilities: Healthcare providers will be notified for all residents of the home and determine if testing for individuals served will need to be done. If so, staff will take the individuals to be tested. The house where the individual lives, will be closed to all activities pending direction from Department of Health and/or Medical Provider. Disinfection procedures will be put in place and the individual with symptoms will be kept away from house mates during this transition time. NO visitors will be allowed in the home until formal guidance is given by Department of Health and/or Medical Provider. No new staff will be allowed to work in the home nor staff that worked in the home, be allowed to work in any other home until formal guidance has been given.

All staff and individuals served from the Arc of Genesee Orleans have received training on proper mask wearing, hand washing, disinfecting and social distancing. Reminders will be given on a daily basis and reinforced during high risk times. Please keep in mind that due to the Office of Civil Rights regulations (HIPAA) we are not allowed to share names of either staff nor individuals and their medical status. This includes testing status. We will be able to share that someone entered into COVID-19 status and testing is being conducted but will not be allowed to share names of person(s) in quarantine or awaiting test results.

As many are aware, Governor Cuomo has executed "Cluster Action Initiative". In response to this, OPWDD issued guidance on 10/23/2020 ordering agencies in different clusters to respond accordingly. In the event that we are in the middle of a Red or Orange Cluster, all certified site-based day services will be required to close/suspend their programs while in the cluster. Various programs are given guidance as to what they will be allowed to provide. In the event that we enter into a cluster determination which will affect services your loved one is given, we will communicate that through various communication tools, including our website, our Facebook page, local news outlets and direct contact via email, phone call or letter. If there are additional questions, please feel free to contact the immediate director of the associated program(s).

Respectfully,

Donna Saskowski
Executive director