



COVID-19 Policies
OPWDD Certified Sites

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INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to comprehend how much our world has changed since March of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our individuals, their families and our staff in ways many of us have yet to fully understand. At these unprecedented times, we must reflect on and learn from our decisions as we go forward.

There will be many unique challenges and it is our goal to utilize this document to prepare our staff, individuals, families and other stakeholders for the wide variety of situations that we may face in the year ahead.

This document was developed through the collective efforts of HCA staff, including key program administrators and staff representing the nursing, clinical, education and maintenance departments. This plan will be shared with key community stakeholders, including: OPWDD Division of Quality Improvement, representatives from the local County Department of Health, individuals and their families, staff and members of the HCA Board of Directors. All feedback from these key community stakeholders will be accepted and considered for incorporation into the document.

It is anticipated that this document will be updated, as additional guidance is provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (DOH), Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Local Health Department as our collective understanding of the COVID-19 virus evolves. Please refer to our website for the most up-to-date information at hcaserves.com.

It is HCA's goal to utilize this document, with its included safety procedures, to keep our individuals and staff as safe as possible in our programs. If we each accept our role and responsibility to implement the practices set forth, we will be able to achieve our goal to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, and, to create an environment where our individuals can achieve their greatest level of independence.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

HCA – (HELPING CELEBRATE ABILITIES)

HCA, now Helping Celebrate Abilities, has been providing services to people with disabilities since 1947. Formerly known as Handicapped Children's Association, HCA began as a small preschool for children with special needs has grown into a much larger organization, serving individuals of all ages. HCA programs include 15 residential group homes, free standing respite, 6 integrated co-taught preschool classrooms, one UPK only classroom; as well as respite, community and day habilitation, counseling, supported employment, and self-directed services. HCA is a New York State Cerebral Palsy Affiliate and a United Way Member agency.

OUR MISSION/VISION

Our vision is to provide opportunities for integration into the community in a dignified, respectful manner and to provide an environment where activities, services and support are based on the individual. An environment where a person with a disability is treated as a person.

STAFF

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Requirements:

- Encourage 6 ft. distance between personnel, unless safety or core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance.
- All staff, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a non-cloth facemask at all times when in vehicles. A face shield is not a replacement for a face mask
- Limit in-person gatherings as much as possible and use tele- or video-conferencing whenever possible. Essential in-person gatherings (e.g. meetings) should be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.
- Establish designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.

USE OF PPE

- PPE will be utilized per guidelines: All staff without a vaccination record on file with HR must wear a non-cloth face mask at all times
- Employees will be provided with an acceptable face covering at no-cost to the employee and agency will maintain an adequate supply of coverings in case of replacement.
- Face coverings must be changed once a day or when soiled.
- Additional PPE will be provided as needed: gloves, face shields, gowns, etc.

HYGIENE AND CLEANING

HCA is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all individuals and staff in our Residential program, and recognizes and accepts its responsibility as an employer and provider of services. HCA will implement procedures, based on current best practice guidelines to create as safe and healthy workplace for staff and individuals as possible. HCA will adhere to hygiene and sanitation requirements from the CDC and DOH.

- Handwashing and hand sanitizing guidelines will be followed.
- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including handwashing with soap, water and paper towels, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible. If staff is not at a location where hand washing is available, then hand sanitizers will be provided.
- All surfaces will be disinfected regularly in congregate care living sites and after each service for other face to face services.
- Limit the sharing of objects and discourage touching of shared surfaces. Staff will disinfect common surfaces and object before use and wash hands after use.
- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection daily

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Residential Managers are able to access related COVID-19 information on the agency's SharePoint portal. This information will also be reviewed and shared at weekly managers meetings and during house staff meetings. Any new policies and procedures will be reviewed and pertinent trainings will be held.

- Any new information will be shared at the staff meetings
- Maintain a continuous log of all staff and visitors who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

HCA has implemented the following health and safety protocols, in accordance with guidance from the New York State DOH and CDC. The highest standard in health and safety management will implemented and considered an integral part of how our program operates.

INSTRUCTING STAFF ON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

All staff will receive training in accordance with the NYS DOH and CDC guidelines. The following trainings will be offered utilizing a combination of in-person and remote/virtual platforms;

- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (Fever $\geq 100.0^{\circ}\text{F}$, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, flushed cheeks, rapid, or difficulty breathing, frequent use of the bathroom);
- Hand Hygiene (washing hands frequently throughout the day with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds and using paper towels to thoroughly dry hands). For staff, when hands cannot be washed, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, with at least 60% alcohol, should be used;
- When to call the RN
- When to isolate
- Agency policy for staff illness and COVID-19 return to work policies;
- Universal Precautions

DAILY HEALTH SCREENINGS FOR STAFF

HCA has implemented health screenings for ALL staff prior to the start of the work day. Any staff with health concerns are required to contact a HCA RN and may be sent home until they meet all required criteria to return to work. Any staff that are sent home will be required to follow up with their health care provider prior to their return. Staff with known exposure to COVID-19 will follow the guidelines put forth by the DOH and CDC for return to work and must consult with a nurse prior to their return. Staff with known exposure to COVID-19 working in a location where there is no other known exposure will be required to quarantine for 10 days before they will be allowed to return to work. Staff will be screened for the following:

- Signs of symptoms of COVID-19 which must be reported to an HCA RN
- Any international travel
- Any travel outside New York and its contiguous states

PROPER SIGNAGE TO INSTRUCT STAFF

All HCA locations will hang signage, in office areas. These signs will include information on:

- When to stay home if sick
- Effective hand washing

- Proper respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Required social distancing protocols
- Proper mask usage
- CDC signs and symptoms related to COVID-19 illness
- Reporting expectations for any signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Proper cleaning and disinfecting guidelines

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Keeping space between yourself and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to illnesses. Since people can spread illnesses before they know they are sick, it is important that they social distance from others whenever possible. Social distancing helps protect people who are at higher risk of getting sick. Everyone will be encouraged to follow social distancing practices.

TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID-10

If a worker tests positive for COVID-19 staff must:

- Notify the appropriate program nurse consultant or nurse on call
- Residential Director will notify Quality Assurance Director Brent Kenny, who will notify OPWDD

RETURNING TO WORK AFTER A POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19

Staff testing positive for COVID-19 will be directed to work with their county's Health Department. The health department will determine the length of time that person must be under isolation/quarantine. Staff will be required to submit documentation from the Department of Health or their primary care provider, releasing them from isolation/quarantine before they can return to the program/work.

All staff must:

- Provide documentation of release of isolation/quarantine from DOH or primary care provider;
- Have been 10 days since first having symptoms;
- Be three days since symptoms have improved including cough and/or shortness of breath;
- Be fever free for at least 72 hours without the use of medication.

If a staff are placed under quarantine due to contact with other COVID-19 positive individuals, the same protocol will be followed, except with a 10 day quarantine per the health department.

VISITATION POLICY

COVID-19 VISITATION POLICY

HCA is strongly committed to preserving the relationship between the individuals served, their families, and friends. We recognize in order to promote individuality, independence, inclusion and productivity we must foster these supports. Therefore, we welcome visitation at the residence.

Naturally, there needs to be policies for the individual, family and agency to be protected. The agency needs clear guidelines from the individual and/or guardian regarding who, when, where visitation is permitted.

All visitors must remain masked unless proof of vaccination is provided. Exception is based on health status of the home. Masks may be required for everyone in the home, regardless of vaccination status in the home.

RESPONSIBILITY PROCEDURE

Residence Manager

- Will ensure masks are worn in the following conditions:
- Visitors that have not provided proof of vaccination
- All visitors if required by health status of the home

Staff of Duty

1. Will provide the family a non-cloth face mask if they do not have one and have not provide proof of vaccination
2. Encourage hand sanitizing upon entry

Visitor

1. Visitors must properly wear a mask unless proof of vaccination status, dependent on health status of home
 2. Visitors will be encouraged to sanitize their hands upon arrival People to refuse to wear a non-cloth face mask will be encouraged to visit outside
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