March 5, 2020

TO: DSHS Contracted Private Duty Nurses and Nurse Delegators

FROM: Bill Moss, Assistant Secretary
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration

SUBJECT: Information concerning COVID-19, or the 2019 novel coronavirus

The Washington State Department of Health has announced 70 cases of COVID-19, also known as novel coronavirus, in residents around the state. You will likely hear developments in the days and weeks ahead. Misinformation may contribute to unnecessary panic, so we are providing this information to you as a reminder of how to protect yourself and others.

As a nursing services provider, you can help protect yourself, your clients and others by taking a few simple steps to help prevent the spread of the disease at home and at work:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use alcohol-based sanitizers when you cannot wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.
- Use personal protective equipment such as gloves when providing direct care. If a client has flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, both the client and caregiver should wear face masks. For more information, review the CDC’s Infection Prevention and Control Training.
- Stay home when you’re sick. Alert your client and your client’s case manager, if appropriate, to tell them you will be staying home.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of the tissue right away.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.
- If anyone you come in contact with is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, keep 3 to 6 feet away.
- Get plenty of rest, drink fluids, eat healthy foods and manage your stress.

If you suspect a possible COVID-19 case, please report it to your local health jurisdiction and assist the client in notifying their health care provider.

Like the flu, COVID-19 is spread from person to person through droplets in the air. Someone can become infected by touching an infected surface and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, currently estimate that the incubation period for COVID-19 ranges from 2-14 days. Symptoms may include fever, cough and shortness of breath, although some people may not have any symptoms. Seniors and people with underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease or diabetes are at a higher risk of developing severe complications.

The Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the general public about COVID-19. If you have questions, please call 1-800-525-0127.