



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

June 16, 2020

AMENDED January 11, 2021

AL TSA: CCRSS #2020-019
COVID 19: REOPENING OF WASHINGTON STATE
AND CLIENT VISITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Dear Certified Community Residential Services and Supports Provider:

THIS LETTER IS AMENDED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT LONG-TERM CARE PROVIDERS MUST CONTINUE TO OPERATE UNDER THE SAFE START FOR LONG-TERM CARE PLAN.

Effective Monday, January 11, 2021, the Governor's Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery goes into effect. This roadmap outlines a regional recovery approach with every region beginning in Phase 1. While this new roadmap effects many people and places in Washington State, residential services and supports providers must continue to operate under the [Safe Start for Long-Term Care Plan](#) under [Governor's Proclamation 20-66](#). Residential Care Services and the Department of Health are finalizing revised Safe Start for Long-Term Care Requirements and Recommendations documents with a planned release and effective date of January 13, 2021.

As Washington State increases the availability of services and citizens are able to enjoy more time in the community away from home, clients supported by Supported Living, Group Training Home, Group Home providers, and State Operated Living Alternatives may also want to enjoy those same opportunities. Under client rights rules and DDA Guiding Values, client are able to participate in activities away from the home if desired or needed. However, with clients leaving the home providers and agencies will want to be mindful of infection control and implement specific procedures to follow when a client returns from an outing.

When a client plans to leave their home for a medical appointment, therapy appointment, an outing, or work in the community, the provider should consider implementing the following infection control procedures:

- Assist the client with acquiring any items needed to follow proper infection prevention practices, such as a mask and hand sanitizer
- Inform the client about potential risks when going into the community, including the increased risk of exposure to COVID 19 and the increased risk of introducing COVID 19 to their housemates upon return;
- If someone is escorting the client into the community, request they pick the client up at the front door or curb;
- Inform the person escorting the client into the community about the potential risks, including the increased risk of exposure to COVID 19 for the client as well as the increased risk of introducing COVID 19 to the home upon return;
- Request the person joining the client in the community to wear a mask at all times while with the client;
- Request the client follow universal masking while in the community;
- Request the client adhere to social distancing practices while in the community;

- Request the client follow good hand hygiene procedures in the community, including frequent use of alcohol based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available;
- With client permission, keep a log of client activities in the community to allow for contact tracing purposes if any community outbreaks occur in businesses or places the client visited;
- Continue to conduct daily symptom screenings with client upon their return to the home;
- Request the client practice social distancing when out of their room upon return from the outing;
- Request the client follow universal masking when outside of their room upon return from the outing; If a provider is able, cohorting of clients who come and go from the home would be recommended.

If the client chooses not to comply with any of these inform the client of the risks to themselves and others. There is informational material that has been developed for individuals and families that describe the current crisis. Informing Families has published resources that may be helpful and are available on their website. Refer to the client's support plan to see if target behaviors are addressed. Consider applying behavioral strategies to support the client to make safer decisions and comply with the guidance from the Department of Health. If the behavioral strategies in the client's plan are not successful you may also contact the client's DDA case manager. They can access assistance from the regional clinical team if needed.

To find out more about the Safe Start Plan for Long-Term Care and obtain other COVID pandemic information and resources, please visit:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/information-providers-and-long-term-care-professionals>

Contact with the local health jurisdiction (LHJ) regarding any specific recommendations, or for information regarding virus activity in the local community can also help a facility determine any other procedures that they may need to add to the list above. A list of LHJs can be found here:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions>

To find out more information about the Governor's Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery "Safe Start Washington" plan, please visit:

<https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/inslee-announces-healthy-washington%E2%80%93roadmap-recovery>

Agencies should continue to practice all infection control measures they have implemented. As always, thank you for your continued commitment to client health and safety. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Antonietta Lettieri-Parkin, Certified Community Residential Services and Supports Program Policy Unit Manager, at (509) 363-3549 or antonietta.lettieri-parkin@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"