

To: South Shore Support Individuals, Families, Caregivers, & Employees
From: Mary Burt, Executive Director
Date: 3/13/2020

On March 10th Governor Charlie Baker declared a State of Emergency due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We have been receiving daily updates from the Commonwealth on the number of cases and on strategies to slow the progression of the virus. Our goal is to keep our individuals, families, care providers and employees healthy and safe. We need your help with this.

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (such as droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Information about how this novel coronavirus spreads is still limited. This coronavirus causes a respiratory (lung) infection. Symptoms of this infection include:

- Fever
- coughing
- shortness of breath
- pneumonia (infection in the lungs)

While most people recover from this infection, some infections can lead to severe disease or death. Older people and those with pre-existing medical problems seem to have a greater risk for severe disease. There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19, other than supportive care and relief of symptoms.

Precautions to help prevent the spread of COVID -19 include:

- Stop hand shaking- use a noncontact greeting method
- Practice good hygiene
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- If handwashing is not an option use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash your hands
- Disinfect surfaces regularly
- Handle food carefully
- Limit food sharing
- Avoid contact with people who are sick, when possible
- Stay home if you have a sick family member
- Stay home if you have a temperature greater than 100.4, coughing, vomiting, diarrhea, a sore throat or other flu like symptoms

To combat the spread of COVID-19, South Shore Support Services will be suspending and adjusting some of our services.

The Family Support Center is postponing all of our social and recreational activities (including our dance in April) until further notice. When activities resume, we will extend the duration of

the program to the number of sessions indicated in the activity summary. We will refund payments made for all classes/groups missed due to cancellations and illnesses.

Family Support Extended Navigation Services & DESE-DDS Project: The family support coordinators and skills trainer should contact families before a home visit and to ask if anyone in the home has a fever (Higher than 100.4 degrees) or new respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat. If so, the family support coordinator will suggest that the family contact a health care provider regarding the symptoms. We will be seeing individuals but will not be doing any social and recreational outings at this time. If our employees are ill, we may need to scale back the support hours.

The Launch Programs are limiting their community activities in large public spaces. We will not be volunteering at South Shore Hospital, and we are cancelling our YMCA extended day program. Please reach out to Launch Program Directors for specific community site cancellations. If you are a Launch participant and you or a household member are sick, please notify the Launch staff and stay home from program. If you arrive at Launch and have signs or symptoms of illness you will be asked to return home. The Launch programs are planning to remain open at this time. This could change if our Launch participants and workers become ill or if we receive notification from Department of Developmental Services to close.

Our Home Support Programs are currently operational. Many of the individuals we serve in our homes have compromised immune systems and are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. Employees are working to sanitize all locations and keep people safe. Family members may choose to bring their loved one home to minimize the possibility of exposure. If we have a spike in absenteeism with ill employees, we will combine program locations to maintain staffing ratios.

Adult Family Care Program will continue to operate. Providers will continue to provide quality care and be reimbursed for that care. Monthly visits for nurses and case managers will be modified to limited visits and/or visits using technological devices. Our AFC team sees 147 people monthly. These workers are at a high risk for exposure. Your RN or Care Manager will be contacting you prior to your next scheduled home visit to determine what visit modifications will be needed. We will provide emergency back up support to those that need it.

Individual Support and Agency With Choice (Momentum) will continue to operate. If our employees are ill, we may need to scale back on the number of support hours that people receive and the scope of the work provided. If you are scheduled for an appointment and you are sick, please notify your worker to stay home. If they arrive to see you and you are visibly ill, they will not be able to stay and work with you.

Business Office Functions will need to be modified. Workers who do not provide direct support will have the option of working remotely. Our covered office hours will be reduced and posted.

Thank you for helping us during this challenging time. We will be sending additional notifications and updates to this plan.

