

July 29, 2021

To: All Hope Employees

From: Senior Leadership Team

### **Independent and Natural Home Settings**

Hope's policy in residential environments that are not owned and operated by Hope emphasize safety for the resident, and encourage out-of-the home activities as much as possible.

We learned from 2020 that many precautions we took against COVID-19 actually prevented many of these sicknesses too! These include regular handwashing, high contact surface sanitizing, and the use of masks and social distancing.

- **All direct support staff must wear masks or face coverings during their shift except for meal or other breaks. Recipients should wear masks or face coverings as tolerated.**
- **Daily health screening forms must be completed by direct support staff using the online tool before starting their shift**
- **Recipients and their families should be educated on vaccination benefits and opportunities offered through Hope so they make an informed choice**
- **Maintain social distancing of 6 feet or more, if you are not providing direct care**
- **Wash your hands frequently. Wash your face mask frequently, if it is designed for using again.**
- **When you are off-work, consider that anyone you come into contact with could be exposing you to COVID-19**

### **VACCINATION BENEFITS**

People are considered fully vaccinated for Covid-19 when they are 2 weeks or more after the second vaccine of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna Vaccines OR when they are 2 weeks or more after the single-dose vaccine of Johnson and Johnson Vaccine.

## **FULLY VACCINATED RECIPIENTS CAN:**

~Visit with **FULLY VACCINATED PEOPLE** indoors can occur **WITHOUT** wearing masks or physical distancing.

~Visit in small groups with **FULLY VACCINATED** people and **UNVACCINATED** people of the **SAME** household (without known risk in that household) and **NOT WEARING A MASK** pose minimal risk **TO ALL**.

~Indoor visit between **FULLY VACCINATED** people and **UNVACCINATED** people (without risk of Covid-19) who **DO NOT WEAR MASK** or **PHYSICALLY DISTANCE** from one another are likely **LOW RISK FOR THE VACCINATED PEOPLE**.

~If **FULLY VACCINATED** people visit with **UNVACCINATED** people **OR** their **HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS** who have **RISK FACTORS**, then **ALL ATTENDEES** should wear masks, social distance, and visit out-of-doors.

~If **FULLY VACCINATED** people visit with **UNVACCINATED** people from **MULTIPLE HOUSEHOLDS** at the same time, then **ALL ATTENDEES** should wear masks, social distance, and visit out-of-doors.

~**FULLY VACCINATED PEOPLE** engaging in social activities in **PUBLIC SETTINGS** should wear mask, social distance and wash hands.

In Natural Home settings, out-of-home activities and supports are encouraged to avoid entry into the home unless other household members have been fully vaccinated. For fully vaccinated staff, entry into the home, using a person centered plan utilizing the risk/benefit discussion guide needs to be completed and submitted to the Hope Health Line for approval.

For the protection of staff, Hope supervisory representatives will also make weekly check-ins with these environments to evaluate risk levels based on occupants adhering to the State of Alaska guidance and mandates regarding social distancing, wearing face coverings, and travel activity.

## **Community Based Activities including Medical Appointments, Group Activities, Recreational Opportunities, and Therapeutic Activities**

Activities for recipients outside the home are encouraged for getting fresh air and exercise with face coverings and where social distancing of at least six feet from other people in public can be maintained!



## **Grocery Shopping, Restaurants and other Stores**

Recipients living in Independent apartments who need assistance in maintaining their residence, and to enter stores to purchase groceries and supplies should follow additional precautions to avoid contamination whether fully vaccinated or not. The recipient needs to be educated and given access to vaccination opportunities offered by Hope, coached in social distancing, assisted in planning to shop during low customer volume times in stores, and handwashing/decontamination practices. These include wearing personal protective equipment of gloves and face masks, then immediately disposing of used gloves when leaving the store.

Access to personal care services like hairdressing salons, restaurants, and other services that normalize life should use the risk/benefit tool, and make a plan. If unsure, contact the Hope Health Line for additional guidance.

When making a plan, use critical thinking skills and take some time to observe the COVID-19 mitigation practices of the business:

- \*Are the serving staff wearing masks and gloves?
- \*Is the store or business designed to maintain social distancing of 6 feet?
- \*Does the business take appointments? And do they ask health screening questions?
- \*Does the business have a sign in sheet for contact tracing?
- \*Have you observed regular cleaning and sanitization practices?
- \*Does the recipient have an alternative choice of place in the event that expected protocols are not being met? (For example, if Fred Meyer store is unexpected crowded but Carr's store has fewer customers, can their needs be met? Or if a restaurant is not applying social distancing, have options of takeout or another restaurant been considered?)



**Medical Appointments:** Contact the provider to learn what their personal protective procedures are and to assure accompanying staff are allowed into the appointment. Ask if the procedure requires a COVID test to be completed beforehand. Make a plan for keeping the appointment and send it into the Hope Health Line at least 72 hours before the appointment for approval or plan adjustment.



**Group Activities (including therapeutic settings):** Group activities policy utilizes guidance from local authorities and the American Camp Association (January 2021), DHSS Guidance for Congregate Non-Residential Settings (June 29, 2020), and Municipality of Anchorage EO-19 Attachment A for Organized Daytime Activities/Camps (March 4, 2021).

The following four mitigation strategies are maintained:

1. Daily screening procedures
2. Maintain social distancing as much as possible
3. Wear a mask at all times
4. Practice handwashing hygiene for staff, participants and visitors

In addition to the general protocols, a hybrid model of distance learning and outdoor activities will be utilized. Additional personal protective equipment protocols apply to participants unable to appropriately wear a face covering throughout, and additional distancing will occur during physical activity periods. Some planned mask breaks will be managed closely also to ensure safe distancing.

Staff will be assigned to no more than three recipients at a time and will work consistently with the same group, but fully vaccinated staff may work with different groups as needed. Each activity group will have a maximum of 25 people indoors, including staff.



## **Transportation for Community Activities, including Day Habilitation or Community Mental Health**

Transportation usually reduces social distancing, so extra care must be taken before transporting recipients in Hope vehicles with staff who are not living with the recipient. The State of Alaska continues to authorize many of these services to be delivered remotely or in the person's residence.

- Fully vaccinated recipients may travel with 2 other recipients in the same vehicle while wearing masks and maximizing seating distance. \*
- Unvaccinated recipients wearing masks may not have other passengers traveling in the same vehicle.

Before transporting, ask the following questions:

1. Can the service be provided in the home or neighborhood while maintaining social distance from others?
2. Is driving essential to providing the service?
3. If so, do you have the necessary PPE including face masks and gloves for yourself and the recipient?
4. Do you have supplies to disinfect the vehicle after returning from the outing?
5. Does the transportation meet a Day Habilitation goal in the person's Plan of Care or Treatment goal in the Behavioral Health Treatment Plan?

## **CONNECTION OPTIONS FOR UNVACCINATED RECIPIENTS**

We understand that many residents are struggling with the inability to see their parent/guardian/family members in person.

Here are some general guidelines for out-of-the home meetings:

1. Choose a place where 6 foot social distancing can be maintained from the guardian or family member and other space users. Look for a park with a covered area, in case it rains or snows. Or, a walk around the neighborhood can be planned.
2. Each family member should be asked the same screening questions as employees or essential visitors before the meeting begins, and be willing to wear a face covering.
3. The staff and recipient will also wear face covering and gloves before leaving the home, and wash their hands immediately upon returning. Staff will provide transportation if necessary and remain present.
4. Hugs, eating meals together and physical contact must be avoided at this time, if both parties are not fully vaccinated. "Share" a meal through a Zoom or other Facetime method. If full social distancing can be maintained, a short "mask break" to have a drink or eat an ice cream is acceptable, and the family member could have a similar "mask break" to create a sense of sharing a treat.

**Exceptions to Mask or Face Covering Requirement within Hope Community Resources**

Recognizing that some recipients may not be able to wear a face covering, for the protection of the direct support professionals, the following accommodations with authorizations apply:

**Health Precaution Accommodations for Recipients Unable to wear a Face-Covering due to Disabling Condition Challenging behaviors**

Name:

DOB:

Statement of disabling condition & challenging behaviors that preclude face-mask compliance:

1.

Description of efforts made to assist individual to tolerate mask wearing to achieve least-restrictive service delivery (even efforts that have been unsuccessful):

1.

Health precaution accommodations:

1. All current health and safety precautions that are presently in place at Hope will be strictly followed with only one exception...the individual is not required to wear a face mask.

2. Staff must wear gloves at all times during contact with the individual. At the completion of the treatment/support session with the individual, gloves will be removed by reversing them without contact with the outer surface on bare hands, placed in a plastic bag, and then placed in the garbage.
3. Staff must also wear newly cleaned surgical scrubs (or long-sleeved t-shirt top and pants) over their regular clothing during the entire contact time with the individual. The scrubs will be changed out immediately after the contact time, placed in a plastic bag, washed with soap and warm/hot water, and dried in the dryer before reuse.
4. Staff must wear a face mask at all times during contact with the individual. If it is a reusable face mask, then the mask must be washed and dried as described in #3 before reuse.
5. Staff must also wear a protective face shield (in addition to the face mask) at all times during contact with the individual.

Limitations to these accommodations:

1. Staff cannot transport an individual who is not wearing a face-mask in their personal vehicle. If transportation to/from a setting is required, then it will need to be provided by the parent.
2. The setting must be such that the individual is not in close proximity with others or likely to bolt from staff to join with others. In addition, the treatment setting must allow opportunity for the staff and the individual to engage in various interactive behaviors that can be positively sustained for the duration of the time together, as well as have access to using the toilet when needed. There may be additional setting limitations directed by the supervisor or Behavior Analyst.
3. The parent must make an informed decision to allow the individual to participate in the staff activity as accommodated. Therefore, that will require ensuring that the parent is fully aware of Hope's current health and safety precautions that are presently in place, as well as the additional accommodations listed above, and the pros/cons of deciding to participate.
4. Staff must also make an informed decision to provide the service as accommodated. The staff person is absolutely free to say yes or no based upon a personal look at the pros/cons, and the staff person is free to change his/her decision.
5. If at any time, the individual grabs the protective face shield of the staff attempting to pull it off, the parent will be contacted to come to the setting and return the individual home immediately. Future activities will be immediately suspended until a review is completed by Hope's Medical Director, Deputy Director of Community Support Networks and Clinical Director.
6. The Network Director for any day hab services that are provided under these accommodations and the Behavior Analyst for any autism services provided under these accommodations must each conduct a weekly review of the services provided for this individual to ensure that the services are being productively helpful without added distress for the individual or additional and unmanageable challenges being presented for the staff person. Depending upon the reviewing person, Ray Collins or Dr. Lester will be immediately notified if it is determined that continuing the accommodations needs to be reconsidered.

Completed by: (name and date)



Program Director: (name and date)

Deputy Director of Community Support Networks review and approval: (name and date)

Clinical Director review and approval: (name and date)