



COVID-19 Policy – Support Recipient Safety

Updated: October 11, 2022

Purpose

Hope Community Resources, Inc (Hope) is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and environment for our employees and the recipients who choose our services. The purpose of this policy is to outline COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies for specific support settings at Hope, such as assisted living homes, group and community activities, natural home supports, transportation, etc. Hope has also developed a broad COVID-19 mitigation plan, which includes policies and procedures to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 for both employees and support recipients. For these policies, see the COVID Risk Mitigation Policy, updated as of October 10, 2022.

Safety Practices for Support Recipients

1. Support recipients are encouraged to wear a mask, as tolerated, when receiving supports in community or group settings, as well as when traveling in a vehicle with others who are not a part of the same household. Support recipients may be required to wear a tight-fitting mask after return from COVID-19 isolation due to a positive test, but only where tolerated. Timelines to return to activities in group settings or in the community may vary due to a support recipient's ability or willingness to mask after a COVID-19 diagnosis.
2. Residents in assisted living homes are observed for symptoms of illness daily. If symptoms are noticed, these symptoms must be reported to the Hope Healthline. Residents should be tested for COVID-19 72 hours after symptoms begin.
3. For non-residential settings, support recipients should be observed for symptoms of illness before receiving services each day and should not receive services if they are symptomatic. Symptoms must be reported to the Hope Healthline. The support recipient should be tested for COVID-19 72 hours after symptoms begin and can return to services after receipt of a negative COVID-19 test and symptom improvement.

Vaccination

Hope respects each support recipients and/or their legal guardian's right to choose whether the recipient vaccinates or not. Hope encourages all support recipients and employees to receive a COVID-19 vaccination to protect themselves, other employees, and those who choose our services.

COVID Positive (+) Isolation and Clearance to Return to Services

A support recipient who receives services in the Behavioral Health Clinic, lives in a natural home environment, attends grouped activities etc. is generally not permitted to receive these services while positive for COVID-19 and on isolation.

Isolation will occur when a support recipient tests positive for COVID-19. General guidelines for when a support recipient or assisted living home may receive clearance by the Hope Healthline are:

1. Support recipient will isolate for 5 days after symptoms of illness begin or test positive, whichever is sooner. After 5 days, if symptoms are improving, the support recipient or home may be cleared to resume normal activities. The support recipient must wear a tight-fitting mask such as a K95, for an additional 5 days.
2. If wearing a tight-fitting mask cannot be tolerated by a support recipient, they were severely ill with COVID-19, or are immunocompromised, a minimum of 10 days of isolation for the individual and the ALH may be required.

Visitors to Assisted Living Homes

Visitors are permitted in all Hope facilities. Visitors must assess themselves for symptoms of illness before or upon entry and sign the visitors log for the home. Visitors must comply with general safety practices as expected of employees, including frequent hand washing and are recommended to wear a mask.

Critical Incident Reporting

If a confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported for a support recipient, a Critical Incident Report with the State of Alaska must be filed within 24 hours. This should be filed by the supervisor who oversees the support recipient's care. An additional report will be made by Hope's Licensing staff member(s) to the State of Alaska Licensing department for any assisted living home locations that are on quarantine or isolation status.

Confidentiality/Privacy

Except for circumstances in which Hope is legally required to report workplace occurrences of communicable disease, the confidentiality of all employee and support recipient medical conditions will be maintained in accordance with applicable law and to the extent practical under the circumstances. Hope reserves the right to inform employees or support recipients that a support recipient or employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 if others might have been exposed to the disease, so other individuals may take measures to protect their own health.

Resources

1. Dr. William Browner, Medical Director for Hope Community Resources, Inc.
2. US Department of Labor Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA). (2021). *Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace*. Retrieved from: <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021). *COVID-19 Workplaces and Businesses – Workplace Prevention Strategies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/workplaces-businesses/index.html>
4. Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Division of Health Care Services Residential Licensing. (2021). *COVID-19 Recommended Guidance for Congregate Residential Setting*. Retrieved from: https://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/SiteAssets/Pages/HumanCoV/VisitationGuidelines_ResidentialCongregateFacilities.pdf
5. Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). (2022). *COVID-19 in Alaska*. Retrieved from: <https://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>
6. State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL). (2021). *COVID-19 Exposure Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Safety Plan*. Retrieved from: https://labor.alaska.gov/lss/training/COVID-19_Safety_Plan_Example_Template.docx