



Building Hope, Transforming Lives.

March 9, 2020

Dear Valued Staff:

As many of you know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has communicated a warning that the COVID-19 (the new coronavirus) is likely to spread more widely in the United States. As of Friday afternoon, March 6, we are aware of one confirmed case in both Bucks and Delaware Counties. This situation requires us to plan carefully to ensure all of our staff and the individuals we serve are cared for in a safe and healthy environment. Our goals during this outbreak include the following:

- Keep our CADES community healthy through prevention & planning
- Remain up to date and align all actions with leading federal and local authorities
- Provide clear, consistent & concise information
- Coordinate all actions through the CADES COVID-19 Action Team lead by Sharon Jones, CADES Chief Clinical Officer

In order to give you as much information as possible this letter is arranged into sections. We encourage you to review the information and speak to any of the nurses in your program, your director, or Sharon, Julie or Cindi with questions or concerns you may have.

Section I: Virus prevention and early identification

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is keeping a close eye on the virus and providing daily updates that are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>. We understand that you may be concerned and understandably so. This is a new virus and epidemiologists and medical professionals are still learning much about it. Typically, human coronaviruses can cause mild respiratory illnesses and the symptoms are very close to the flu. The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**.

- *Fever*
- *Cough*
- *Shortness of breath*

The health and safety of our community remains our primary concern and we encourage everyone to protect themselves and those around them. We can help prevent the spread of many illnesses, including COVID-19. Since there is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19, the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, the CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least **20 seconds**, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; before and after contact with other individuals; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.*
- *Avoid close contact with people who are sick.*

- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.*
- *Stay home when you are sick.*
- *Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.*
- *Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe (door knobs, counters, wheelchairs)*
- *If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer should be locked or in an area inaccessible to individuals we serve. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.*
- *Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.*
 - *CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.*
 - *Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.*

Section II – Prevention techniques for you, your family and while at work

To keep yourselves and your families safe, follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, including cleaning hands and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

If you are sick:

- *If you have a fever call your doctor, do not come to work*
- *If you have respiratory symptoms (coughing, shortness of breath) call your doctor, do not come to work*
- *Doctors are recommending sick patients call the office before going to the office to prevent the spread of germs.*

Surfaces:

- Throughout the work day / work shift – staff should work systematically to disinfect surfaces in the program area.
 - Prioritize “high touch” surfaces first:
 - wheelchairs, hoist lifts, changing tables, medical equipment
 - door knobs, counter tops, desks, tables, sink handles, toilet handles
 - communication pads, instructional materials, toys, fidgets, games
 - Computer mice and keyboards
 - Your cell phone
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective (Lysol, Clorox, etc).
- Alcohol pads can be used on mice and the keyboard. Power down the computer first.
- Isolate toys and fidgets that are student or person specific in their own container for cleaning.

Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

- Complete laundry with gloves on. Removed bibs and chew items with saliva wearing gloves.
- Do not shake dirty laundry which could disperse the virus through the air.

- Launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting (Hot whenever possible) for the items and dry items completely.
- Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

I encourage you to take preventive steps as you care for yourselves and your families. Everyday actions such as regularly washing your hands or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and staying as informed as you can about developments in your local communities, and at CADES, are key steps to staying healthy.

Section III – Social Distancing Measures

The CDC and local authorities have recommended social distancing measures be put in place immediately. As such, we have put out the following guidelines for CADES to be implemented immediately and will remain in effect through May 15:

- Visitor restrictions (see attached notification)
 - Call visitors before meetings to ensure they understand restrictions
 - Encourage meetings by phone whenever possible.
 - Decrease access of visitors into program hallways.
 - Keep visitors isolated to the main foyer, annex conference room and admin conference room as much as possible.
 - Use the playground door to escort visitors to the conference rooms rather than use program doors.
- No community integration trips, including field trips, CBI, Adult Program integration
- Limit medical appointments for CLA residents to only those appointments that are life sustaining or are significant to health progress. All other appointments will be rescheduled. Limit visits to urgent care and PCP offices, unless directed by the nurse.
- Limit community contact through shared surfaces

Section IV - Work Disruptions & Program Closures

We will be taking an abundance of caution in the decisions made day to day and week to week as we learn about the spread of this virus. We will continue to monitor developments and guidance from the CDC and our local department of health closely. This guidance will inform all of our decisions, and we encourage staff to rely on health organizations like these as their primary sources of information and advice.

Rutgers Avenue Campus

If we have reason to believe and/or when we are notified that a student, participant or staff of GCMS, the Adult Program, MMO or administration has had contact with a person who is in quarantine for suspicion of contact or who has developed the virus the following steps will occur:

- The Rutgers Ave. building will close
 - o Administration will follow the recommendations of the CDC and local authorities to determine next steps on re-opening based on the extent of the contact.
 - o The building will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Communication will be delivered via phone messaging systems and will be posted on our website. Please ensure your contact information is completely up to date with Human Resources.

CLA Program

The quarantine plan is in development and will be completed by Wednesday 3/11. It will be communicated to all staff once complete.

If we have reason to believe and/or when we are notified that an individual resident or staff of the CLA has had contact with a person who is in quarantine for suspicion of contact or who has developed the virus the following steps will occur:

- Communication will be delivered via phone to all staff and will be posted on our website. Please ensure your contact information is completely up to date with Human Resources.
- Administration will follow the recommendations of the CDC and local authorities to determine next steps on re-opening based on the extent of the contact.
- The building will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Work stoppage overview

The work stoppage overview is in development and will be completed by Wednesday 3/11. It will be communicated to all staff once complete. Our primary goal is to ensure your health and safety, and as such we wanted to communicate the information we have ready to date. Our other primary goal is to provide you with assurance about how we intend to operate as we manage intermittent and/or long-term program closures.

Throughout the upcoming weeks we expect to develop and share updates based on the guidance of the CDC and local agencies. As we make decisions moving forward, we will communicate them immediately to staff utilizing a variety of communication methods.

If you think you have symptoms of COVID-19, please contact your primary care physician by phone. Again, all of us should prepare by taking preventive actions as warranted by the circumstances that come our way.

Thank you for your patience, understanding and acts to help us stay healthy as a community.

Sharon Jones RN, EdD, MSN, BA, CEN, CDE
Chief Clinical Officer

Julie Alleman
CEO