



COVID-19 Preparedness Plan – DHS- Licensed Residential Programs

(all NHCFS Residential Programs)

According to Executive Order 20-48, critical businesses, including providers licensed or certified by the Department of Human Services to deliver residential services, are required to follow guidance from the [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\)](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The MDH/CDC guidance is designed to prevent, mitigate, or respond to the transmission of COVID-19.

This plan was developed using the “COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Optional Template for DHS Licensed or Certified Residential Services” (“Plan”) template provided by DHS. NHCFS will evaluate, monitor, and update Plans as necessary, on a regular basis.

1. Hygiene and source controls

NHCFS PLAN FOR HYGIENE AND SOURCE CONTROLS:

- All staff providing direct care to students are expected to wear an alternative face mask during their shift.
- Staff working with students in quarantine are recommended to utilize the following PPE: gloves, surgical mask, gown/scrubs, eye protection (goggles or face shields)
- Staff have been educated on the appropriate sequence for putting on PPE and how to safely remove PPE.
- Students are continuously educated on proper hand-washing techniques and are encouraged to perform frequent hand hygiene.
- Students are discouraged from touching his/her face.
- Students are continuously reminded to cover his/her cough or cough into his/her elbow.
- Disposable facemasks available for staff/clients.
- No use of drinking fountains.
- COVID-19 supply preparedness boxes available from NHCFS nursing department in the event there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Hand sanitizer available throughout the facility.
- Tissues in each office, at reception desk, in each conference room; extra tissues on-site.
- ‘Cover your cough’ signs posted throughout the building, hand washing signs posted in bathrooms.
- Trash can near door in bathrooms.
- Travel: NHCFS follows guidance from the CDC and MDH and Executive Orders from the MN Governor’s Office regarding travel restrictions.
- In light of the COVID pandemic, the CDC and MDH have announced the importance of receiving a flu vaccination for the 2020-2021 year. Nursing staff has provided/will continue

to provide resources of organizations in our communities who will be administering flu vaccinations this year. Nursing has secured a resource to bring the flu vaccination to the Itaskin Center and the Cottage; other residential programs will bring their students to the resources identified by nursing staff.

2. Cleaning and disinfecting

NHCFS PLAN FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- Common areas of the facility and high-touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least three times a day (see *Attachment A: Daily Cleaning*).

3. Screening and policies for staff and volunteers exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19

NHCFS PLAN FOR SCREENING AND POLICIES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS:

- Symptoms of COVID-19 (copy of the symptom screen) posted on entrances to the facility.
- All persons entering the building are required to complete a self-symptom screen prior to entering the facility.
- Staff must have their temperature taken and documented prior to beginning their shift. Documentation of his/her temperature serves as acknowledgement of not having any symptoms on the self-symptom screen. *If staff has a temperature over 100.4 OR presence of symptoms on the checklist, s/he cannot continue into the building; the staff person must contact his/her immediate supervisor and/or the facility director.
- NHCFS will follow the appropriate MDH guidance [i.e. *COVID-19 When to Return to Work*] to determine when an employee may return to work when s/he has symptoms and is tested for COVID-19, does not have symptoms and is tested for COVID-19, etc.
- Staff are not expected to self-quarantine if another person living in his/her home has been instructed to self-quarantine due to possible exposure.

CONFIRMED COVID-19

- If a staff is diagnosed with COVID-19, the staff person is responsible to immediately notify their immediate supervisor that s/he was confirmed positive. The supervisor, or designee, is responsible for notifying facility nursing staff, the Human Resources Director and the Compliance Director (*to complete OSHA requirements*).
- Staff from the COVID-19 Task Force (i.e. Program Director, QA Director, HR Director, Nursing, etc.) will facilitate action steps to be taken, including notification to MDH and coordinating contact tracing of staff and residents.

Additional information regarding contact tracing is included at the end of the Plan under the heading 'Notifying and Working with MDH'.

4. Screening and policies for residents exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19

NHCFS PLAN FOR SCREENING AND POLICIES FOR RESIDENTS:

It is important that students and their families are informed that social distancing and quarantine/isolation related to exposure or prevention of COVID-19 is not considered a violation of a person's right. Rather, this is a point-in-time allowable response to a pandemic following the direction of public health and personal health care providers.

- A pre-admission COVID-19 screening is conducted via telephone with the student's family and student (if able); during this call, the admission process and prevention strategies are discussed. Nursing follows up with the family prior to admission to answer any additional questions or address any concerns.
- All students admitted to a NHCFS residential program are screened for signs of COVID-19 and actively monitored for fever and respiratory symptoms (i.e. shortness of breath, new or change in cough, sore throat). Nursing staff are contacted per screening guidelines. New admissions are tested as permitted by guardian permission, local hospital guidelines, and/or MDH guidelines. If the youth tests negative, s/he can be transitioned to the appropriate unit/program as soon as the negative test result is received. If the youth tests positive, s/he must be quarantined for a minimum of 10 days OR 24 hours no fever/resolving symptoms, whichever is longer (refer to *CONFIRMED COVID-19* below). Students that are not tested will be quarantined for up to 14 days.
 - A unit at the Itaskin Center has been repurposed as an 'admission unit'. Students are transitioned to the appropriate unit or program when determined safe to do so (see *above*). NHCFS residential programs licensed for 10 or less follow the same quarantine protocols within the facility.
 - If a student is not able to be quarantined due to non-COVID-19 related safety concerns (i.e. suicide precaution), a medical provider's order will be requested. The facility will assess the situation and evaluate other care options, if needed.
- ALL students are screened for COVID symptoms twice a day; staff use a screening form that specifies when to contact nursing.
- If it is determined that a home visit is necessary for the student's treatment, typically for purposes of transition/discharge planning, an individual monitoring plan will be implemented upon the student's return to the facility. This plan will be developed by nursing and program staff.

CONFIRMED COVID-19

If COVID-19 is confirmed, the infectious student will be isolated on the admission unit until his/her quarantine period is over. Other students within the unit and/or facility ~~will~~ may be isolated; the facility will follow CDC and MDH recommendations in this regard. **New admissions may be suspended.** The decision to suspend new admissions will be based on the facility's ability

to safely isolate the infectious student(s) while maintaining the new admission practices identified above.

If needed, additional space in the facility (i.e. classrooms, conference rooms) will be repurposed and used to cohort students as needed to mitigate the spread of infection.

If a student requires a higher level of care or the facility cannot fully implement recommended precautions, arrangements will be made to transfer the student to another facility that is capable of meeting the student's treatment needs.

5. Social distancing

NHCFS PLAN FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING:

It is important that students and their families are informed that social distancing and quarantine/isolation related to exposure or prevention of COVID-19 is not considered a violation of a person's right. Rather, this is a point-in-time allowable response to a pandemic following the direction of public health and personal health care providers.

- Students are continuously educated on the meaning and importance of social distancing, including current recommended practices. Students are reminded to practice social distancing by keeping at least 6 feet between themselves and others at all times.
- The Itaskin Center (IC) is operating with a daily census below the licensed capacity.

6. Food preparation and meals

NHCFS PLAN FOR FOOD PREPARATION AND MEALS:

- Students are not permitted to share food, beverages, condiments, or utensils.
- Kitchen staff consistently reminds students to maintain social distancing and that sharing is not permitted.
- Meal times are staggered to limit the number of people in the cafeteria at the same time.
- Meals are prepared and dished by kitchen staff.

7. Ventilation

NHCFS PLAN FOR VENTILATION:

- Staff encouraged to open office windows for fresh air, weather-permitting.
- Facility HVAC systems are regularly maintained.

8. Face coverings

NHCFS PLAN FOR FACE COVERINGS

- Per the Executive Order 20-81 from the MN Governor's office, a face mask or covering is required to enter NHCFS facilities.
- Signs are posted on the entrances and throughout the facility instructing persons to wear a face covering per the Executive Order.
- Staff required to wear a mask outside of personal office and if another staff or client is in their office; clients wear mask when inside the office. *Client will need to inform NHCFS if s/he has a condition for which wearing a mask is not recommended by the CDC; proof or explanation of medical condition, mental health condition, or disability is not required.*
- Disposable facemasks available for staff/clients.
- Facemasks must be worn by all staff and clients facilitating and participating in group.
- Nursing staff will provide training to staff on the appropriate way to put on and take off a face covering.
- Students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings when they are not on their living unit, with the exception of while eating.

9. Visitors

NHCFS PLAN FOR VISITORS:

- On-site visitation may resume on 01/19/2021 with implementation of the guidelines and strategies outlined below:
 - Prior to beginning the visit, visitors are required to complete a COVID-19 symptom and exposure screening checklist; have their temperature recorded; and agree to follow the infection control strategies and precautions of the facility. Staff will meet visitors in the vestibule of the facility to complete these items.
 - Visitation must take place in designated spaces; visits are strongly encouraged to take place outdoors whenever possible.
 - Limit visitor access only to areas of the facility necessary for the visit to occur.
 - Visits must be scheduled to ensure a designated space is available for the visit to occur.
 - Allow for at least one hour between visits so that the space can be cleaned properly.
 - Visit areas are cleaned and disinfected by staff before and after each visit.
 - Encourage social distancing and the use of face masks during the visit; minimize close contact as much as possible i.e. student on one side of the table and family members on the other side.
 - Ensure hand sanitizer is available to the student and visitors during the visit; encourage frequent use.

- Remind student and visitors to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth, cover their cough, and practice good hand hygiene immediately prior to and after visits.
- To further reduce the risk of silent disease spread from asymptomatic visitors, encourage families to practice strict social distancing when not at the facility and take precautions in the community while their loved one is in care. Offer to provide educational materials from MDH, MN DHS, or the CDC.
- Visits should be limited the student and no more than five (5) parents/guardians and siblings from the same household (persons considered essential in the student’s life) unless otherwise necessary for the student’s treatment. Guidelines and strategies apply to all visitors, including siblings.
- In the event a visitor is not cooperative with the guidelines and strategies of the facility, the facility may turn the visitor away or not allow a visit to continue. The potential negative consequences on the student will be considered.
- Visits may be canceled with little notice if the facility determines an increase in health or safety risks.

10. Transportation

NHCFS PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION:

- Drivers should wear a cloth face covering for source control
- Wash hands for 20 seconds immediately before and after transit, and when hands are visibly soiled, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Improve ventilation in the vehicle by opening windows or setting the air ventilation/conditioning on non-recirculation mode
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces in and on the vehicle (e.g., steering wheel, door handles, seatbelt buckles, radio and temperature dials) before and after each transport
- Avoid touching surfaces that are frequently touched by drivers or other passengers (e.g., door frames, door handles, windows)
- Do not touch face with unwashed hands
- Students living in the same program can be transported together
- The following safety precautions will be taken when transporting students:
 - Student and staff will wear a fabric face mask for source control
 - Student will sit in the far back seat while transporting
 - Student will not touch door handles; staff will open door for student
 - Staff will disinfect vehicle wearing appropriate PPE and using approved disinfectant after each trip.

11. Communication and training about the plan

NHCFS PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING ABOUT THE PLAN:

- All agency staff have access to the COVID-19 preparedness plans via NHCFS IT network Share Drive; staff will explain relevant sections of the plan to clients, as needed and appropriate, and provide clients with resources to follow the plan (i.e. face mask).
- The QA Director updates agency staff of changes made to the Plan via email; email includes a summary of the updates and a copy of the updated Plan.

12. Staffing Preparedness Plan

NHCFS PLAN FOR STAFFING SHORTAGES:

- Supervisors will schedule staff for 12-hours shifts as able to do so.
- Units are staffed with trained PPE staff; additional staff would be trained as well.
- If all existing staff within the program are utilized and the program is still short-staffed, the program will initiate the following call-down plan for staff:
 - Other NHCFS residential program staff
 - NHCFS CTSS school-based staff
 - Nursing staff
 - Residential case managers and Program Directors
 - Program Administrators
- If needed, NHCFS will utilize the *Crisis Staffing Shortage* plan developed by MDH.
 - Implementation of the crisis staffing plan includes utilizing lowest-risk staff first; the lowest-risk staff may be symptomatic and/or waiting for COVID test results.
- If needed, NHCFS will utilize resources provided by MN DHS.

13. Testing Preparedness Plan

NHCFS PLAN FOR TESTING IN CONGREGATE CARE (RESIDENTIAL) FACILITIES:

- NHCFS will work with Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital (GICH) (Grand Rapids) and Sanford Health (Bemidji) for testing residential youth.
- NHCFS will follow the GICH testing guidelines for a possible outbreak or mass testing. The guidelines are as follows:
 1. If resident is symptomatic, resident has phone visit with Grand Itasca provider. Call 218-326-3401 to schedule.
 - a. If resident is asymptomatic and needs testing due to an exposure to a known positive, visits are not needed.
 2. Provider on phone will order COVID test if criteria is met.

3. If someone at facility is educated and comfortable swabbing for COVID, go to step 4. If not, resident will need to arrive for curbside testing. Let provider know this and you will be transferred to the appointment line after phone visit. You can also get ahold of the appointment line by calling the main number at 218-356-3401. A curbside appointment will be scheduled. If this is the case, you will be given instructions when making curbside appointment, skip to step 11.
4. Nurse at facility will fill out the Excel spreadsheet provided by GICH each time the list is updated by following the directions on the spreadsheet.
5. Staff at the facility will print and fax the form each time it is updated to 218-999-1919 as shown on form.
6. A staff member from your center will then go to Grand Itasca's Rapid Clinic entrance on the day of testing and pick up the needed swabs from the registration staff member at the window. Please state who you are and that you are here to pick up COVID swabs for X facility.
7. Nurse from facility will swab the appropriate residents.
8. Please mark the following on the lab slip that is in each of the biohazard bags.
 - a. Write ordering provider, date, time of collection and circle collection/swab type.
 - b. Check the box for Long term care/group home/assisted living inpatient and list the facility on the line.
 - c. Write fax number of which facility would like to receive the results on the bottom of the slip; also write preferred contact phone number to call at the facility if there are any issues. *(This is the only way to receive results.)*
9. Place completed swabs in test tubes, label with appropriate patient label and place individually back into each biohazard bag with completed lab slip in the pocket.
10. A staff member from your center will bring the swabs back to Grand Itasca appropriately individually packaged in the biohazard bags and compiled into a larger bag. The bag will be dropped off to at the same registration window in the Rapid Clinic where they were originally picked up. Please state who you are and that you have COVID swabs to drop off from X facility.
11. Grand Itasca's lab will send tests to Fairview to be processed
12. Results will be faxed back to the facility at the fax number written on the lab slip once they are processed and received.
13. Fairview system will call the patient will positive results. An RN from Grand Itasca will call your patient with a negative result; the patient will receive a letter stating negative result a few days later as well.

MODIFICATIONS TO LICENSING REQUIREMENTS:

The Commissioner of Human Services has temporarily modified certain requirements for licensed children's residential facilities, determining these modifications necessary to provide flexibility to

providers, mitigate the spread of the virus, and protect the health and safety of residents and staff. NHCFS has implemented the following:

- All spirituality services, activities, and counseling may be provided by telephone or video instead of in the community. License holders also must implement additional measures to allow for continued spirituality involvement, including the recommendations in the MDH *Interim Guidance for the Prevention of COVID-19 in DHS-Licensed Residential and Non-Residential Settings with At-Risk Persons*.
- Programs that restrict or eliminate in-person visitation based on MDH and CDC guidance must offer alternative means of communication with people who would otherwise visit, such as virtual communications (phone, video communication). The program also must implement additional measures to allow for continued social contact including the recommendations in the MDH *Interim Guidance for the Prevention of COVID-19 in DHS-Licensed Residential and Non-Residential Settings with At-Risk Persons*.
- Mental health treatment programs may allow the mental health professional to provide their weekly face-to-face clinical supervision by telephone or video.
- Shelter programs may allow a resident to stay for more than 90 days without a variance from DHS if the program documents the reason the resident needs to stay at the program for more than 90 days.
- The timeline for completing an administrative review of each use of a restrictive procedure is extended from within three working days after the use of the procedure to within 10 calendar days after the use of the procedure.

COMPLIANCE WITH EXECUTIVE ORDERS:

NHCFS staff are expected to comply with all Executive Orders from the MN Governor's office pertaining to COVID-19.

NOTIFYING AND WORKING WITH MDH:

You are expected to notify MDH when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your program by calling 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504 (Mon. – Fri., 8AM-5PM). You are expected to work with MDH and comply with their directive when given.

Nursing staff, or the QA Director, will make the initial notification of a positive case in the facility to MDH. The QA Director, or designee, will be the primary contact for MDH in facilitating and reporting healthcare worker (HCW) contact tracing information. NHCFS will follow MDH guidance and instruction regarding contact tracing, including but not limited to:

- Reporting positive cases of staff and residents to MDH via RedCap; the phone number above; or other MDH-directed method.

- Use of the MDH definition of ‘contact’; ‘infectious period’
- Use of the example HCW risk-assessment form provided by MDH.
- Reporting HCW contact tracing and risk-assessment results, and other requested information, to MDH.

ATTACHMENT A: DAILY CLEANING

Daily Cleaning & Safety Checklist

****Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect****

Upon arriving to work:

- Wash hands
- Disinfect phone with Clorox or Lysol wipe

When clients arrive:

- Direct them to wash hands immediately
- Complete screening tool with clients when:
new client, client has visited a "hot spot,"
OR client and/or family is presenting with symptoms.

After each group, wipe down:

- Tables (including sides/skirt & legs)
- Chairs (including backs & legs)
- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Countertops
- Handles
- Other surfaces touched by clients/staff
- Spray Lysol on carpet surfaces

Mid-Day:

- Disinfect phone with Clorox or Lysol wipe
- Disinfect keyboard (if you've been doing office work) with Clorox or Lysol wipe
- Disinfect workspace

Before Eating:

- Disinfect surface you will eat at
- Wash hands

After Eating:

- Disinfect surface you ate at
- Wash Hands

Before Leaving for the Day:

- Wipe tables (including sides/skirt & legs)
- Chairs (including backs & legs)
- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Countertops
- Handles
- Other surfaces touched by clients/staff
- Spray Lysol on carpet surfaces
- Remove and replace garbage bags
- Disinfect phone with Clorox or Lysol Wipe
- Disinfect keyboard with Clorox or Lysol Wipe
- Clean workspace with disinfectant

As Needed:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow, throw used tissues in the trash, & immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Supplies Needed (please notify supervisor when supplies are low):

- Clorox or Lysol wipes
- Hand Soap
- Lysol Disinfectant spray (aerosol can to use on soft surfaces)
- 409, Lysol, or other hard surface cleaner
- Disposable gloves
- Trash bags
- Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol