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TO: DDD PROVIDER NETWORK
FROM: Division of Developmental Disabilities
RE: Response to COVID-19 (rel18)
DATE: 8/25/20

COVID-19 Guidance for Alabama Support Coordination and Service Provider Agencies
Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

The ADMH-DDD responded quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic and state of emergency by rapidly releasing a series of guidance communications relating to risk mitigation and funding. This guide initiates the process to reopen facility-based day services under certain conditions. ADMH-DDD has worked closely with its COVID-19 stakeholder committee that includes providers, advocacy groups, AMA and ADMH-DD Staff. This workgroup continues to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on services and individuals across our state. The workgroup also makes recommendations relating to the same.

Beginning September 1, 2020, Facility-based Day habilitation providers have the option to re-open their facility-based day programs under certain conditions:

1. **ADMH-DDD asks Support Coordinators/Providers, Individuals and Families to continue to explore alternative service options that may best provide protections from COVID-19 infection (e.g., virtual, community, self-directed services, to name a few).** Individuals getting services from ADMH-DDD are considered at high risk of long-term adverse consequences from COVID-19. If individuals who use ADMH-DDD HCBS waiver services go out (for work, essential services, recreation, participate in facility day services, etc.), they must have an opportunity to make an informed choice about the risk. Work with the individual’s service coordinator as needed. Individuals must be given:
 - Alternative options available to meet their needs and interests
 - The benefit of staying home and/or participation in services that limit risk of exposure to COVID-19
 - Encouragement to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing if they can’t be persuaded to stay home and to thoroughly wash their hands when they return.
 - An opportunity to develop a plan to reduce related risks for both themselves and others.
2. Provider must obtain the written informed consent of the individual’s legally authorized representative to participate in facility-based day habilitation programs, work or other such activity. The written consent must be filed in the individual’s file.
3. If the person has made an informed choice about participating in an activity that is permissible under federal, state, and local guidance, then precautions must continue to remain in place.
4. The provider must ensure the completion and availability (must be uploaded into ADIDIS) of Individual Risk and Service Assessments to ensure risks, support needs and services are identified that further mitigate risks.
5. Additionally, unless an individual is not able to wear a mask and requires an accommodation per the ADA, masks must be worn inside buildings or facilities and outside when physical distancing is not

possible. Some individuals may not be able to wear a mask due to a medical condition, or because it causes them distress.

6. ADMH-DDD providers delivering facility day services in congregate settings must follow the statewide COVID-19 Health Order for Alabama which can be found at www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/index.html. Providers should keep in mind this information is subject to change and the provider is responsible for ensuring they have the latest information.
7. Providers must also continue to follow direction from federal, state, and local public health officials.
8. **Providers must also have received approval of their Infectious Disease Emergency Plans by their Regional Offices.** Facility Day providers who decide to reopen will be monitored to ensure compliance with their approved emergency plan
9. The provider must take into consideration the current COVID-19 situation in their respective county/locality of service and understands high exposure rates may increase risk of exposure to individuals served that may necessitate continued closure
10. The provider must have adequate supplies to mitigate risk from the point individuals walk into the facility to the time that they exit and can also provide adequate infection control measures throughout the day
11. The provider must demonstrate they have evaluated the physical plant to determine whether they can adequately meet social distancing guidelines (e.g., number of people in setting on any given day to include staff, etc.)
12. The provider must have the capacity to implement social distancing and daily infection control when transportation is provided
13. The provider must understand Support Coordination entities and other Advocacy organization may report concerns related to risk mitigation to ADMH-DDD for follow-up and/or investigation
14. The provider must ensure clear communication with families relating to risk mitigation strategies (eg., meals, activities, social distancing, transportation and transportation options, etc.)
15. The provider must inform ADMH-DDD of their intent to reopen

Providers MUST ensure compliance with their approved Infectious Disease Emergency Plan.

For previous DDD COVID-19 Guidance releases, visit: <https://mh.alabama.gov/covid-19-dd/>

The COVID-19 Workgroup Members represent various provider groups, associations, and advocates and are charged with reviewing information related to the impact of COVID-19 and make recommendations to the DDD. Members of the group are: Chris Stewart; Susan Ellis; Jo Poates, Arvy Dupuy; DeAnna Ferguson; Ken Oliver; Jamie Herren; Wade Reese; James Tucker; Wettingfeld, Ginger; Mattie Jackson; Rebecca Wright; Elizabeth Hataway; Nelson, Drew; Mary Roth; Tina Shaddix; Robin Hall; Cody Ingram and Dianne Durbin/Zina May.

Please send any questions you may have relating to COVID-19, services, etc., to:
ADMH-DDD.Questions@mh.alabama.gov