



**TO: DDD PROVIDER NETWORK**  
**FROM: Division of Developmental Disabilities**  
**RE: Response to COVID-19 (rel19)**  
**DATE: 10/21/20**

**COVID-19 Guidance for Alabama Support Coordination Agencies**  
**Division of Developmental Disabilities Services**

**Appendix K**

In response to questions relating to the Appendix K, the following clarification is provided:

1. Requests for changes in Staff ratios should be a direct result of COVID-19 related staffing challenges (e.g., staff tested positive for COVID-19, staff, or multiple staff, are quarantined due to exposure). Approval is temporary and not intended to be long term, therefore, providers should make continuous effort to ensure adequate staffing.
2. At no time should a request involve changes in approved specialized staffing arrangements.
3. Self-directed services – overtime may only be approved as a direct result of COVID-19 related staffing challenges and should also be considered temporary. Information should be provided at time of request to substantiate approval.
4. Waivers to temporarily suspend routine employee screening (e.g., TB, background checks, drug screens) are temporary, and all required screenings will be required to be completed. Now that businesses have opened to a large degree, these screenings are expected to be performed unless the provider or Self-Directed EOR can substantiate the reason for continued delay is a direct result of COVID-19.
5. DDD Regional offices may request information needed to substantiate a continuation of staffing changes.

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**As a reminder, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are considered at higher risk of long-term adverse consequences from COVID-19, either due to their primary disability or a secondary condition.**

The CDC and ADPH use the term “at higher risk” to describe persons who may experience greater illness if they acquire the COVID-19 virus, due to their age or underlying health conditions.

Please make special note of those underlying conditions that may put people at higher risk of serious COVID-19 illness include:

- Blood Disorders (e.g. sickle cell or on thinners)
- Chronic Kidney Disease (medication treatment or dialysis)
- Chronic Liver Disease (cirrhosis, chronic hepatitis)
- Compromised Immune System (immunosuppression) cancer, chemotherapy/radiation, organ or bone transplant, high doses of corticosteroids or immunosuppressant medication, HIV/AIDS
- Endocrine Disorder (diabetes mellitus)
- Metabolic Disorder (inherited or mitochondrial disorder)
- Heart Disease (congenital, congestive or coronary artery disease)
- Lung Disease (asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bronchitis, emphysema, impaired lung function, or required oxygen)

Neurological, neurologic and neurodevelopmental conditions (brain spinal cord disorders, spinal cord injury, peripheral nerve, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, seizures, stroke, moderate to severe developmental delay, muscular dystrophy)

Hypertension or high blood pressure

Smoking

Obesity

Also, note, gastrointestinal issues may be an indicator.

To mitigate risk for exposure during this pandemic all providers must ensure that their Infectious Disease Emergency Plans reflect all requirements and they have received approval by their Regional Offices. Providers MUST also ensure compliance with their approved Infectious Disease Emergency Plan.

Providers must take into consideration the current COVID-19 situation in their respective county/locality of service and understand high exposure rates may increase risk of exposure to individuals served that may necessitate continued or re-closure. The COVID-19 Risk Indicator Dashboard can be found at [www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/index.html](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/index.html).

Facility Day providers who have reopened will be monitored to ensure compliance with their approved emergency plan. 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](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/index.html). Providers must keep in mind this information is subject to change and the provider is responsible for ensuring they have the latest information.

Providers must also continue to follow direction from federal, state, and local public health officials.

Providers MUST ensure Staff are wearing appropriate PPE and are following all other CDC guidelines to help prevent risk of exposure when providing supports as part of their risk mitigation strategy. Masks MUST always be worn during the delivery of waiver services.

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.

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.

Providers must ensure clear communication with individuals and families/guardians relating to risk mitigation strategies (E.g., meals, activities, social distancing, transportation and transportation options, etc.)

Please send any questions you may have relating to COVID-19, services, etc., to:

[ADMH-DDD.Questions@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:ADMH-DDD.Questions@mh.alabama.gov)