



**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services**

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RELAY MISSOURI for Hearing and Speech Impaired and Voice dial: 711

**Randall W. Williams, MD, FACOG**  
Director



**Michael L. Parson**  
Governor

March 16, 2020

Dear Community Provider:

We know you are all closely monitoring the evolving news as it relates to developments around the novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) in Missouri, across the country, and around the world. As experienced leaders, you understand the importance of staying calm, while also being prepared. We want to inform you of efforts underway at the Department and State level to address policy and regulatory issues and to share with you information and resources to stay abreast of the events as they unfold.

- Department leaders are meeting daily with State leadership to receive updates on the status of the virus and discuss issues across Departments and our communities and set policy.
- Division leadership is meeting internally to discuss issues around policy and program requirements.
- The DHSS and DMH are working on a waiver amendment that will increase flexibility with our waivers to enable providers to be innovative as you manage through this emergency and deal with the related staffing issues.
- DHSS, DMH, and Social Services are working closely to share information, align efforts, and ensure consistent messaging. DHSS is the lead in this effort.
- The Department has not restricted visitors to the building at this time but we are evaluating the meetings scheduled and will either provide alternative options through WebEx or conference calls for those who prefer to join remotely or will cancel meetings if purpose is not critical to allow the State and all stakeholders the time to focus on priorities.

For the most current information on the status of the virus, federal and state announcements, and the most up to date resources, the following are the best sources for information.

**World Health Organization:** <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

**Center for Disease Control (CDC):** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services:** [www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus](http://www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus)

**Missouri Coronavirus Information Hotline:** 877-435-8411. The hotline will be operated by medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.


**Missouri Department of Mental Health:** <https://dmh.mo.gov/disaster-services/covid-19-information>

At this time, the Division is not making any decisions to close programs that operate in large congregate settings such as day programs. Nor are we making recommendations to restrict individual's involvement in daily activities. For the time being, these decisions will be left to providers, individuals, and family members to decide what is in their best interest. This is subject to change as the situation evolves and guidance comes down from our federal and state partners. Please heed the recommendations from the authorities listed above regarding ways to keep the people you serve and our staff safe. In the meantime:

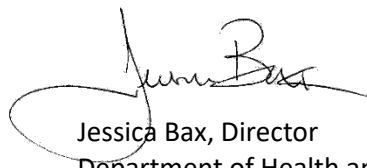
- Review your emergency preparedness plans with all your staff. For providers serving in a group setting have a plan if you are caring for someone who needs to be quarantined. Most people will not have an alternative to their care setting if there is a need to quarantine but not be hospitalized; however, it may be worth discussing with the family if caring for the individual from their home is a possibility. The primary purpose is to manage spread of the virus.
- Talk with your staff about emergency planning with their family. Know where your staffing vulnerabilities are. For example, if they have family with compromised health that they will have to care for or if they do not have alternative plans for caring for their children should there be daycare or school closings.
- Review for appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) use and availability, such as gloves, gowns, respirators, and eye protection. If there is difficulty accessing or ordering PPE, please contact the local health jurisdiction.
- Make sure you keep at least a 21 day supply of medications on hand. MoHealth Net has provided guidance to pharmacy providers that loosens prescription refill requirements. See Provider Bulletin Volume 42 Number 30 from MoHealth Net.
- Talk with providers of day, employment, and ancillary services such as ISD and CI. In the event those services are temporarily suspended, those employees may be a resource to fill staffing needs in residential services.
- Monitor for compliance with basic infection control practices.
- Monitor for compliance with standard hand hygiene practices, using alcohol-based hand rub/hand sanitizer (ABHR/ABHS) as the preferred method of hand hygiene in most situations. If hands are visibly soiled, wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Facilities/homes should ensure that hand hygiene supplies are readily available.
- If you suspect a possible COVID-19 exposure, please follow guidance provided by the CDC.

The situation continues to evolve and we will share information with you as it becomes available. Thank you for your continued commitment to the health and safety of those we all serve.

Sincerely,



Valerie Huhn, Director  
Department of Mental Health  
Division of Developmental Disabilities



Jessica Bax, Director  
Department of Health and Senior Services  
Division of Senior and Disability Services