



HEALTH ALERT

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The Department of Human Services' (DHS) Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is working closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) to ensure preparations for a response to a **possible Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak** in the State. DOH is the lead agency for the commonwealth's response to COVID-19. At the time of this dissemination, Pennsylvania has zero confirmed cases of COVID-19.

The Department has received a number of requests for guidance related to COVID-19. With an abundance of caution and to give direction to those with concerns about COVID-19, we have gathered some established contact routes and information from DOH:

- Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) (Source: CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html>
- If you have questions specifically regarding COVID-19 in relation to health care settings DOH has provided resources here:
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus%20Resources.aspx>.
- Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (Source: CDC): https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-business-response.html.
- For information on what to do if you are sick, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>
- For questions about ODP regulatory compliance related to COVID-19, providers can submit inquiries to the licensing resource account at the following address ra-odplicensing@pa.gov. Otherwise, please visit the DOH site <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>, which has several downloadable documents that can be used for information dissemination, or call 1-877-PA-HEALTH.
- The Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre of the Philadelphia region released an update on the COVID-19 for individuals with deaf and hard of hearing needs:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V922kV3q5zA&feature=youtu.be>.

Again, DHS is supporting DOH in the disseminating information related to COVID-19 and all guidance is provided by, and should be sought through, DOH.

All ODP providers are encouraged to:

- 1) Review internal infection control protocols and emergency backup plans for events in which a provider does not have adequate staffing to meet individual's health and safety needs.
- 2) Evaluate staff adherence to provider infection control protocols.
- 3) Evaluate capacity to implement emergency backup plans in the event staffing is impacted by the COVID-19 virus.

While COVID-19 is raising international concern, it presents an opportunity to evaluate preventative infection control measures. Medically fragile individuals, those in congregate settings, and the staff that support/interact with them are all at increased risk for infections of all kinds, not just COVID-19. As always, the best response is prevention and the best prevention is good infection control.