

April 11, 2020

## COVID-19 UPDATE FOR LEXINGTON LEADERS

	People we Support	Comments	Employees	Comments
Precautionary Quarantine due to illness	5	3 pending test results	27	
Tested for COVID-19 due to Symptoms	11		10	
Tested for COVID-19 due to Exposure	15		37	
Negative for COVID-19	6		10	
Positive for COVID-19	2		1	Albany home
Pending Test Results	18		36	
# of Homes under Isolation measures		2		

As requested, we will try to issue this bulletin 2-3 times a week so you receive information in a consolidated format.

- **How are people affected doing?** Earlier this week we shared with you that 3 members of our Lexington family had tested positive. Bonnie continues to struggle. Jimmy and our one employee in Albany continue doing well with minor to no symptoms. Our two teams and their leaders continue to display amazing support to all the men and women in these homes.
- **News Media:** Recently you may have seen news stories that speak to the impact of COVID-19 on individuals and staff in group home settings in New York city. These stories tell of the importance of the work that all of you do each and everyday. They are designed to heighten societal and governmental awareness of the importance of the work we do on a day to day basis even when COVID-19 was not present in our world.
  - The articles speak to the high vulnerabilities of the individuals we support to succumb to COVID-19 due to the higher rate of medical conditions that they are diagnosed with by nature of their developmental disabilities, similar to seniors.
  - The articles speak to the spread of the virus in congregate care settings due to the difficulties of the individuals to socially distance themselves from each other. This is a concern in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living and settings such as ours. This shows the recognition that our staff need to be recognized as well as the rest of the medical professions for the important role that you and they play.
  - In the articles, they note concerns with staff safety in this setting. It is important to realize that we have had a four week period to prepare and have taken many measures to acquire and preserve our PPE supply. Unfortunately this was not the case for the staff and organizations that were forced to deal with this very early in New York City. Our heart goes out to all of the individuals and staff who have led us through this and we are learning from their experience to better prepare Lexington to rise up together through this. We will keep all of them in our thoughts and prayers.
  - Finally, one of the articles speaks about a 12% increase in the rates. Though not finalized yet, OPWDD has shared that they are considering a temporary increase in IRA funding as we are caring for people at home and are not able to bill for day hab services. The purpose of it is to be able to continue to fund day hab staff salaries as they are deployed to the IRA's. It is not an increased funding to the agency. In fact, Lexington has seen losses in revenue and increased costs due to COVID-19.
- **Use of PPE and Disinfection procedures.** It is important during this time frame that staff continue their heightened awareness of the use of PPE's and disinfection procedures. As unnatural and uncomfortable the masks and gloves feel, please gently ensure that staff are

using them. People we support have generally been home for close to 4 weeks, so the virus can only come from staff and visitors. Help your staff understand that these are the things that are going to keep our Lexington family safe.

- **Social Distancing in our Homes.** Social distancing has turned out to be the most effective measure with preventing the spread of COVID-19. In our homes, this can be challenging because of the need to provide personal care and other supports. Generally, we want our staff to create an environment that is a home similar to your own for the people we support to live in. In our own homes we all tend to become relaxed and not be as concerned as we are while we are out in our community. This is probably the one time we will ask you to do the opposite of what we have always asked you to do. It is a time where we cannot become relaxed and many of the things you do will not at all feel like you are in a home environment. We recognize this and encourage this as it is the best way to keep everyone safe.
  - We must still provide supports to our individuals on a daily basis. In order to do this, social distancing can be challenging. We are asking each of you to work with your staff and clinical team to explore ways to maximize social distancing throughout the day when personal care is not needed. Our group photos show us all the fun that people are having and serve to inspire each other, but it reminds us that there are times when we may be able to rethink how we are supporting people. Let's find every opportunity to create the social distancing for the people we support, while still finding ways to show them how much we care for them.
  - We want to remind you that this is an important protocol for when people are outside as well. Whether people are going outside for a walk, to smoke, sit at a picnic table, or go for a drive, the six foot away from another person still applies. This applies to both staff and people we support.
  - Due to vulnerabilities of people we support, we are asking that we do not purchase food through drive-thrus or takeout. We ask that staff do not bring these in to the house. Staff's belongings should be disinfected with wipes or sprays before being brought into the house.
  - The Arts Center is offering free virtual activities every day as of Monday, April 13. Please take advantage of them. Please contact Maria Nestle for more information.
- **Please speak up.** As we navigate these times, it is very important that we hear from you. We were able to provide a two week laundry service to our affected Albany staff because Missy spoke up. We sent out an explanation for why Jimmy was isolated at home because our west managers spoke up. We will be setting up a weekly optional management meeting for any of you that would like to attend and hear from us directly. Otherwise, we ask that you email, call, or contact us through workplace with any thoughts, comments, challenges or ideas you have.

**We will get through this together as a family and will remain strong. Thank you for all you do. We truly appreciate you!**

With gratitude and tremendous respect for what you do,

**Shaloni & Dan**

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The Arc Lexington | [Website](#)

