

# LEXINGTON HAPPENINGS



## SPECIAL BULLETIN: COVID-19 UPDATES

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

### MESSAGE FROM SHALONI



Dear Lexington staff members,

We find ourselves in an extraordinary situation with COVID-19. In the past couple of weeks, things have moved very quickly, and I want to let you know how we are dealing with it.

First, I want you to know that there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in any of our programs at this time. We are awaiting test results on one person. He was tested due to being symptomatic, but our medical staff feels that his symptoms are likely unrelated to COVID-19. Two employees are also awaiting test results. Those two employees and three others are in a 14-day precautionary quarantine due to potential exposure outside of Lexington. In the entire Arc NY family, there have been 15 cases of COVID-19 confirmed among people we support across the state. The majority of these individuals reside in New York City.

As you can see, the population we serve is at no greater risk for catching COVID-19 than anyone else in the community. The reason Lexington takes such great steps to prevent such illnesses is because we support very frail individuals. We want to make sure to completely minimize their chances of getting sick. Lexington's precautionary measures, environments and sanitization practices related to COVID-19 are above and beyond what you would find in the community or even healthcare environments.

We have a team, led by Dan Richardson, working around the clock to coordinate, prepare and manage our plan to ensure that everyone stays safe and healthy. Our job is to do everything in our power to ensure that people we support have the safest place to live and you have the safest possible working environment. Our priorities and the action steps we have taken include:

1. Implement steps to reduce exposure to COVID-19 in our environments:
  - a. All day programs have been closed. Only a handful of individuals are being supported during the day due to their families having to work.
  - b. All outings and visits to our residences have been cancelled.
  - c. Everyone going into any of our buildings is being screened.
  - d. The closure of our day programs has allowed us plenty of space to practice social distancing in non-residential buildings. Large meetings have been cancelled. Other meetings and interactions are being held via videoconference.
  - e. Paychecks/paystubs are being mailed.
  - f. Very comprehensive sanitation, disinfection and personal hygiene practices have been implemented.
2. Ensure that we have adequate supplies:
  - a. An inventory has been completed of all food and household supplies. We have worked with several vendors to ensure that our supplies will be enough for 30 days. 75% of our houses have already reached this goal; others will get there within a week.

b. The most challenging area has been in procuring medical supplies. We have enough hand sanitizers, gloves, special nutrition items and adult briefs. We are still trying to procure more masks, gowns and no-touch thermometers.

3. Ensure that we have a plan to manage those who become ill:

- a. The team has developed an 11-person unit at 465 North Perry Street (Johnstown Day Hab). It is intended to support people who become positive for COVID-19. We feel that the best way to reduce the risk of infection to others is to take care of them separately. I am extremely grateful to the nurses and direct support staff who have volunteered to work at this unit. These staff had specialized training on Friday and the unit is ready to be utilized, if needed.
- b. Gloversville and Oppenheim Day Hab buildings have also been prepared as part of the contingency plan in case we need people to move from their homes.
- c. We have Telemedicine going into every one of our homes so that people can be seen by a doctor at any hour without leaving their home.

4. Ensure that we are supporting you as you do your job so you can best manage your life and keep yourself and your family healthy:

- a. Staffing our homes at this time is the most critical need we have. Because of what you do, not only are you defined as “essential workers,” you are indeed essential to the health and safety, and happiness, of each person we support. I am truly indebted to every direct support staff, from both residential and day programs, for stepping up and going above and beyond each day.
- b. We are very grateful to all of our clinical, medical, employment, family services and clinic staff who are going out of their way to help and support our residences. I understand that this may be difficult for you as your workdays are now completely different, but I also know that each of you gives your all for people you support. You’re achieving the same mission in a different way.
- c. Our support departments - maintenance, transportation, IT, payroll and finance, human resources, purchasing, food service, administrative and every other person at Lexington - are going out of their way to ensure that Lexington continues to function for the people it supports and its staff.
- d. We heard that some of our staff have been concerned about having enough food supplies, so we arranged for a quick co-op order. We will continue this every other week. We are working on setting up something like this for household supplies as well.
- e. We have heard that staff may be afraid of exposure and are asking for masks. As we have no COVID-19 cases, our medical staff do not feel that there is a need for everyone to wear masks. Use of masks is being required in our Mountainview homes as a precautionary measure to safeguard extremely frail people. With a nationwide shortage in masks, we need to use our supply only where medical staff feel that it is needed. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its advice, suggesting that, in a crisis, healthcare workers could use bandanas or scarves over their faces. You may use that if you choose. We are also looking into outside contractors to see if they can make homemade masks for any employee who wishes to have one.
- f. As you deal with this, please come to us if there is anything that is not working, or if you have a suggestion to do it a different way. We also recognize that you may be facing personal challenges as a result of COVID-19. Please reach out to your supervisor or any member of our leadership team. You have my commitment that we will be understanding, supportive and flexible as much as we possibly can.

I’m so proud of the work you are doing during this unprecedented time. We have always come together at challenging moments like this. Lexington is strong and resilient, and we will continue to rise and thrive – together.

Thank you for your support to everyone we are responsible for at Lexington, and to each other. Please take care of yourselves, your family and the Lexington family.

With gratitude,

Shaloni

## #RISINGTOGETHER AT LEXINGTON!



We may be cooped up for now, but that doesn't mean we can't have fun and spend time with people we love! Thanks to all the staff who tirelessly show up to work, keep things fun, and go the extra mile to keep everyone they support as healthy, comfortable and happy as possible. Here are some uplifting stories from last week:

*Top left: Susan Sprung and the rest of the family at Park Avenue kept busy by making St. Patrick's Day sensory bottles!*

*Top right: Staff at Rosewood know how important Alan's relationship with his sister is to him, so they arranged for her to visit him while maintaining a safe distance using a phone and a window!*

*Middle: The Psychology and Clinical Departments made activity bags containing materials for arts and crafts, physical movement, socialization, sensory and wellness, hobby and sports-related activities and delivered them to 25 houses!*

*Bottom: Kingsboro Avenue turned their driveway into a rainbow! This is a contribution to the 518 Rainbow Hunt Facebook project, which is meant to help people connect and reduce anxiety. Family Services and Cutter Lane also contributed window rainbows!*

## RESOURCES

- [United Concierge Medicine—The Virtual ER](#) (Lexington Telemedicine Provider)
- [Employee Assistance Program: 1-800-252-4555](#)
- [YMCA Emergency Childcare Initiative](#)
- [Google Arts & Culture Project](#) - virtual access to international arts and culture spaces
- [New England Aquarium](#) - virtual visits, live presentations, videos and activities
- [PDF: COVID-19 Workplace Tips for Employees](#)
- [PDF: How to Hand Rub](#)
- [PDF: How to Hand Wash](#)
- [PDF: Respiratory Etiquette](#)
- [PDF: What You Need to Know About COVID-19](#)
- [PDF: What to Do If You Are Sick with COVID-19](#)