



UPDATES FOR LEXINGTON LEADERS

April 20, 2021



COVID-19 AT LEXINGTON AND IN OUR COMMUNITIES

We learned last week of more exposures in Fulton County - on a Gloversville Transit bus and at Aldi's in Johnstown. We have also of late received alerts about various restaurants and businesses in and around Fulton County that have experienced COVID-19 positive cases – three restaurants were flagged within one week. Cases are rising in our communities – Fulton has a 7-day positivity average of 4.4% (mid-week last week it was 3.9%), Schoharie is at 4.4% (last week 3.2%) and Albany at 2.9% (2.5% last week). Numbers are slowly but steadily increasing and coupled with that Fulton County has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the state.

Since March 16 we have had 10 of our homes experience a positive employee case. Because of the high vaccination numbers of the people we support in our residential program, and because we are already using enhanced disinfection protocols and wearing KN95s and face shields, we haven't had to put any of these homes on enhanced PPE. But, coupled with the community numbers, we have a serious situation....and thus making it even more important to get as many of our staff vaccinated to reach #LexingtonImmunity.

Vaccinations:

Staff vaccination numbers have been slowly increasing and we are now at 53.8% or 867 employees. Please support your staff to get the vaccine while we can still help them get a vaccination. Here's our vaccination rate by county:

- Fulton 55.7% or 674 employees
- Schoharie 54.1% or 145 employees
- Albany 35.3% or 47 employees

Here's a website with information and videos from Albany Medical center to encourage people to get vaccinated www.CapitalRegionVax.org. Please take a few minutes each day to share a poster or brief video with your staff.

You can continue to contact our #LexVaxChamps who can help you find a vaccine:

- Albany - Teresa Wands - (518) 774-9476
- Fulton - Kelly Green - (518) 736-4193
- Schoharie - Liz Weingarten - (518) 295-8810 ext 230

Information about the Vaccine is at www.thearclexington.org/vaccine

IMPORTANT UPDATES

REVISED GUIDELINES AND POLICIES - PLEASE REVIEW

As we continue to have success in having people we support vaccinated in our residential program, support those in our community to get a vaccine and work on striving for #LexingtonImmunity from our staff, we have been able to revise some of our current COVID-19 policies. The documents are included below at the hyperlinks and changes are indicated for each:

COVID-19 Safety Checklist 4/16/21

In this revised version of the checklist, there is a new bullet point added to #5 Social Distancing; it states, "If everyone living in the home is fully vaccinated then individuals can enjoy meals and snacks using normal seating arrangements after the SLPs have had a chance to assess house-specific seating plans." Also in this version is the new ability for fully vaccinated staff, who have the applicable Employee ID Badge, to choose to not wear the face shield.

- ***COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire 4/2/21***
- ***COVID-19 Program and Office Building Visitor Sign In***
- ***COVID-19 Visitor and Symptom Check Log***

Because of NY State's new Travel Advisories, we have revised the Screening Questionnaire question about anyone in a Household who traveled outside of THE COUNTRY in the last 14 days instead of out of state. We also revised accordingly the Visitor and Symptom Check Log and the Program and Office Building Visitor Sign In.

COVID-19 Community Inclusion Guidelines 4/7/21

Revised in this new document are:

Group outings will now be limited to 15 people receiving services

Transportation Plans must be created and approved by the Manager in advance; general rules regarding vehicle capacity and seating

People who are fully vaccinated will be able to access additional locations and activities

COVID-19 On-Site Family Visit Guidelines 4/7/21

Revisions in this document include:

Increased options for on-site visits with family and loved ones

In addition, two important policies, among other information, will be communicated to staff through the next issue of HR Updates. They are a revised *Workplace Drug and Alcohol Policy* and *Usage of PPE and Building Screenings*. Both are very important and we hope that you will read through them and pose questions to your Directors before this information goes out to All Staff in HR Updates. We have included the new policy for each here, and there is a hyperlink to the documents after each policy revision:

Changes to Required PPE Usage and Building Screenings - 4/15/21

As we strive to reach our goal of #LexingtonImmunity, we continue to assess our safety procedures with COVID-19 by working with Dr. Cope and Dr. Luz, Lexington's Medical Directors with guidance from the CDC and our local health department. Beginning April 26, fully vaccinated staff (2 weeks past final dose) will be eligible for **reduced PPE** and a **streamlined screening process**.

The reduced PPE option will permit fully vaccinated staff to forego wearing a face shield in the workplace, *unless it is otherwise required due to individual specific procedures or care plans*.

The streamlined screening process will permit fully vaccinated staff to receive an abbreviated screening process, as they will not be required to be re-screened as they re-enter Lexington properties during the course of the workday. However, OPWDD continues to require all staff to be rescreened at regular intervals, so the procedure to rescreen employees after 8 hours of work will continue to be required.

These two options will be given to fully vaccinated staff who choose to use them. Fully vaccinated staff may choose to continue the use of the face shield and the regular screening process. If you prefer to continue the usage of the face shield, Lexington will continue to supply them at no cost to you.

Human Resources will be issuing new ID badges to fully vaccinated employees. They are similar to the current Lexington ID badge but will have a tamper-proof vaccination sticker on the back. If you are fully vaccinated and choose to exercise the reduced PPE and/or the streamlined screening process options, please show your badge to your supervisor or the assigned screener each time you arrive at work. The new ID badges will be distributed during the week of April 19th, and become effective Monday, April 26th.

If you currently have a Lexington issued security ID badge and have been fully vaccinated, we ask that you bring your security ID badge to one of the following individuals for placement of your vaccination sticker during or after the week of April 19th:

- Mary Shafer – Schoharie
- Jill Cassaro – Burke
- Donna Steinburg – Oppenheim
- Laura Empie – 465
- Albany - We will be bringing the necessary stickers to your manager for placement on your ID badge.

Our medical team will continue to review guidance from the CDC, NYS Dept of Health, and OPWDD to ensure we have the safest practices at Lexington. Once we achieve #Lexingtonimmunity, the people we support and our staff will be able to safely engage in a broader range of life activities with fewer precautions.

We will continue to help you find the easiest way to get a COVID-19 vaccination if you want one. Please contact one of our #LexVaxChamps for help finding a vaccine:

· Albany: Teresa Wands, (518) 332-5674
· Fulton: Kelly Green, (518) 736-4193
· Schoharie: Liz Weingarten, (518) 295-8130 ext. 230
Thank you for helping to make Lexington a safer place against COVID-19.

Changes to Required PPE Usage and Building Screening 4/14/21

DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

While NYS law has changed regarding the recreational use of marijuana outside of work, it is important to note that **all Lexington properties remain drug- and alcohol-free**. The new law clearly states that marijuana use is still prohibited in workplaces.

While alcohol is legal, the expectation always was that employees would not report to work under the influence. Now that recreational use of marijuana is legal, the same expectation applies here. Employees are strictly prohibited from coming to work under the influence of marijuana, illegal drugs, prescription drugs with or without a valid prescription, and alcohol. (You should also be aware that it is illegal to operate a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.)

We ask that each employee make a commitment to keep Lexington a drug and alcohol-free workplace. Attached you will find our updated Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.

Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy - 4/15/21

SAFETY COMMITTEE PRESENTS 2ND QUARTER SAFETY CAMPAIGN *If You See It, Say It*

The "If you see it; Say it!" safety campaign is one that has been highly successful in the past, and we are hoping this will be the case going forward. As always, if there is ever a situation or environmental hazard that needs immediate addressing please do so. The focus of this safety campaign is specifically on immediately acknowledging staff that are doing the right things to ensure safety. It is about positively reinforcing our nurturing and safe environment. Our staff are wonderful, go above and beyond all the time, and this is a simple tool to recognize them for what they do daily to keep everyone safe!

This safety campaign applies to all departments, begins on April 1 and runs through June 30. The campaign is simple - catch someone doing something to ensure the safety of someone/group of people we support or co-workers and fill out a "See It, Say It" Safety Card about the person and a description of the safety action taken. A person can be entered more than once during the campaign. Collect them throughout the quarter and choose one from the entries to be recognized on Workplace and in front of peers for the campaign. Then send card to Michelle Peryea. Three cards will be drawn for \$100 prize to spend on their team.

Here are the documents related to the campaign. Please contact Bill Roe with any questions:
RoeB@thearclexington.org.

"See It, Say It" Safety Campaign information
"See It, Say It" Safety Cards

Dear Lexington Leaders,

Thank you for your help in getting us to this point in the pandemic where 96.1% of the people we support in our residential program and 49.5% of those we support in the community are fully vaccinated! This is such an important part of our war against the coronavirus. Our focus now is on getting staff vaccinated and supporting them to do so. It's so important for the people we support, our staff, and frankly our bottom line to get to #LexingtonImmunity (70% of staff). Reopening programs and services is so important for everyone in the Lexington family.

Thank you to everyone who has supported staff to get the vaccine. If you have staff members who are still deciding, we have various resources we can send you, or people that staff can talk to about the vaccine. Please use the flyers and videos in the Albany Med website. Please don't hesitate to contact your Directors for any help with staff or to let them support YOU in getting staff vaccinated. We appreciate your help more than you know. Thank you for your support of staff - the vaccine will keep them and their families, the people we support, and our communities, safe from COVID-19.

Shaloni & Dan

This newsletter will be archived at the following link:
<https://thearclexington.org/lex-leaders-covid-updates>
