



Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families

DCYF Contracted Programs

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Email to Providers - March 2, 2020

Dear providers,

I want to provide you all with an update on the Coronavirus, officially known as COVID-19. Rhode Island has identified two presumptive positive cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and a third person is being tested for COVID-19. At this time, the DCYF is not aware of any COVID-19 cases impacting the children, families, or staff of the Department.

The science continues to evolve and what we know about this virus is subject to change. However, **the latest guidance from CDC is that the risk of asymptomatic transmission is very low and if you are not exhibiting any symptoms there is no need for concern or to change your daily routine.**

It is important that we all remain informed and that we work together to prevent the spread of diseases. The Department of Health recommends that Rhode Islanders take the same measures that healthcare providers recommend to prevent the spread of flu and other similar viruses:

- Get your flu shot and encourage the people around you to do the same.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick. Anyone who is feeling ill should stay home from work or school and call their doctor first before going to a health center or hospital.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) by wiping them down with a household disinfectant.
- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.

- The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it and you have respiratory symptoms. It is important that we keep the supply of masks available for those who really need them (e.g., healthcare providers and those who are sick).
- If you have recently traveled from an area with [widespread or ongoing community spread](#) of COVID-19 and you have symptoms of the disease (fever, cough, shortness of breath), reach out to your healthcare provider and call ahead before going to a healthcare facility. The healthcare provider or facility will work closely with RIDOH to determine the best course of action.
- It is important that people know when to go to a hospital emergency department. Many types of illnesses and injuries do not require an emergency department visit. Going to an emergency department for something that could be treated by your primary care provider or at an urgent or express clinic will likely result in an extended wait.

For our providers who manage residential or congregate care services – if a child in your care is presenting with any symptoms, please:

- Call the child's primary care physician and describe the child's symptoms. Follow the directions given by the physician.
- Email (preferred) or leave a voicemail for the child's casework AND their supervisor, with details of the child's symptoms and the doctor's recommendations.
- Provide a daily update on the child's status to the caseworker and supervisor.

Below are links to factsheets on COVID-19 and universal precautions for COVID-19, the flu and other illnesses:

- [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#) (English)
- [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#) (Spanish)
- [Universal Precautions Factsheet](#) (English)
- [Universal Precautions Factsheet](#) (Spanish)

Please visit this link (<https://health.ri.gov/diseases/respiratory/?parm=163>) for more Rhode Island Department of Health information on COVID-19.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Kevin Aucoin

Acting Director, Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families