Guidance for Disability Services Providers
Re-Opening or Continuing Operations

June 08, 2020

Context

With Alberta's relaunch strategy, the community disability service sector is preparing for a staged relaunch of disability services and supports that were reduced, provided virtually and/or closed to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

This document, based on best practices identified through orders by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, provides advice and guidelines to support service providers in the development of relaunch plans. Community disability service providers should also review the [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#).

This provides general information about the public health orders, what is required and how you can apply them to your organization.

The situation is changing rapidly. This information is current as of the date of publication. To stay current on the most recent public health recommendations related to COVID-19 in Alberta, please visit [Alberta Health](#) or [Alberta Health Services](#) (AHS)

Communication Related to COVID-19
Service providers operating community access programs are strongly encouraged to:
1. Begin or continue to offer remote programming, supports and services to individuals identified as high risk for contracting the virus.
   such as individuals 60 years+ and/or have immunocompromised conditions.
2. Prioritize adult Albertans served through Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Family Managed Services (FMS) agreements, and individuals living with family or in supportive roommate situations.

Slowly and cautiously expand access to community access programs for individuals living in group homes. Each service provider will need to consider and/or advise specific to their individualized situation. For example, if an individual resides in a home with an immune compromised or medically fragile person they should continue to limit their exposure, community.

- Encourage staff and volunteers to remain up to date with developments related to COVID-19 and measures to reduce the spread [here](#).
- Remind employees about available social and mental health supports during this stressful time, and encourage them to use these resources.
- Notify employees, volunteers and patrons of the steps being taken by the workplace to prevent the risk of transmission of infection, and the importance of their roles in these measures.

These notifications should also include how workers and volunteers can:
- mitigate and reduce risks when commuting to and from work (e.g. refrain from carpooling with people outside of household, encourage wearing masks on public transit);
- mitigate risks of transmission in shared spaces, including home and work; and
- mitigate risks when engaging in other activities outside of work, including at secondary job locations.
- Post information in areas where employees and volunteers can refer to them.
  - [Help prevent the spread posters](#)
- Prepare for increases in absenteeism due to illness among staff, volunteers and their families.
- Please continue to wash your hands, stay home when you are sick, including symptoms of fever (38.0C), cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, sore throat, and runny nose, maintain

Community and Social Services, Disability Services

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physical distance from others, stay socially connected, and look out for your friends, family and community as we progress through each stage. We will need each other through every stage of this relaunch and into the future.

Isolation Requirements

14 Day Isolation – requires any person returning from international travel or was in close contact with a person confirmed with COVID-19, or has **left the residence** for a period of longer than 24 hours, to isolate/quarantine for a minimum of 14 days.

10 Day Isolation – requires any person who is confirmed case of COVID-19 be in isolation for a minimum of 10 days from the start of their symptoms, or until symptoms resolve. (Whichever is longer)

Exemptions – quarantined and isolated persons who require COVID-19 testing, critical care for pre-existing medical conditions or emergency care for themselves or their minor children.

Visitor Restrictions

Screening
- Limit visitors to the site to designated essential visitors only. Designated essential visitors are 18 years of age or older.
- Have a staff greeter to ensure each designated essential visitor is verified and undergoes a health screening prior to entering.
- Temperature screening is completed for all visitors entering the building using an infrared non-invasive device.
- Visitors who answer YES to the screening questions must not be allowed access to the building, or must leave the building if they have already entered, and be directed to isolate.

Access and Moving Around Building
- Ensure designated essential visitors wear a mask continuously while in the building.

- Ensure designated essential visitors are escorted at all times.
- Access to the building is restricted to a single point of entry.

Physical/Social Distancing

- There should be **no non-essential visitors** at the program**.**
- **Maintaining** a 2 metre/6 feet separation between individuals (e.g., workers, individuals, and volunteers) is required where possible when supporting individuals with disabilities.
- **Restrict** the number of employees, volunteers and individuals at the site **at one time**, depending on size of location, which may result in limitations that are different than maximums allowable under the order (e.g. outdoor gatherings, attendance at public recreational facilities permit up to 50 individuals).
- **More than one program or service** can be offered per building site as long as **separation** between programs is maintained (separate entrances/exits, washrooms) and all **health requirements** are followed.
- Use **1:1 individual to staff ratios** whenever possible, decrease the number of staff who work with an individual if they cannot maintain 2 metre/6 feet distancing requirement.
- **Increase** separation between desks and workstations
- **Limit** the number of people in shared spaces, such as lunchrooms, or stagger break periods.

Removing chairs from spaces and taping markers on the floor at 6-foot distances may be helpful in maintaining physical distancing.

Health Assessment Screening

- Ensure **all** staff, individuals, contractors and visitors entering and re-entering the site **completes a health assessment questionnaire**.
- **Record results** of health assessment screening information in individuals' files.
- Programs should keep **daily records of anyone entering** or **attending** the site who stays for 15 minutes or longer (e.g. staff

working each day, individuals). **Records must be kept up-to-date** and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of an outbreak.

- **Advise staff** to complete 2x daily self-checks. (once immediately prior to attending work)
- If staff/individuals become **ill on site** they must be **sent home immediately** with a mask. If they take public transportation they should be sent home in a taxi with a mask.
- If there is a **new confirmed outbreak** of COVID-19, public health will provide direction for control measures for all staff and individuals on the affected site.
- Symptomatic staff and individuals are required to go home immediately and to **isolate**.

Notification/Disclosure
- Advise **staff** they **must immediately** tell their supervisor if they are ill, have worked in the last 14 days, or are currently working at a site where there is a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak.
- Advise **staff** they **must immediately** tell their supervisor if an individual is or appears ill.
- **Call 811** when a suspected/probable/confirmed COVID-19 is identified for the **first time at a location**.

The Medical Officer of Health /public health will provide control measures, including direction for notification of staff, individuals and families if there is a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Contact Information Alberta Health
For Individuals
If you have symptoms of COVID-19 you should complete the online self-assessment.

Call 811 to speak to a nurse.

For Congregate Care Sites
Call the AHS Congregate Care Response Line **1-844-343-0971** to inform Alberta Health of suspected, probable and confirmed COVID-19 cases, for guidance and support.

Any staff developing symptoms while at work, must notify their supervisor and immediately leave to self-isolate.

If staff take public transportation the employer must send them home by taxi with a mask.

Staff who become ill cannot work for 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.

Masking Guidelines

Anyone who provides direct care to individuals must wear surgical/procedure mask at all times. Service providers should provide training to staff and individuals on how to put on and remove personal protective equipment (PPE).

While working in a resident area a mask must be worn at all times, unless staff can maintain social distancing (2 metres, 6 feet) from residents and/or coworkers at all times.

Staff who do not work in resident areas or have direct resident contact are only required to mask if physical distancing (2 metres, 6 feet) cannot be maintained at all times or if entry into the home/facility is required.

Personal Protective Equipment

Surgical/Procedure Masks – required for continuous masking protocols.

Full PPE is required for staff providing direct care to anyone with a confirmed case of COVID19, with **aerosol generating** procedures (e.g. personal care, feeding assistance) and respiratory illness. Full PPE includes: gloves, gowns, facial protection (N95 respirators) and eye protection (safety glasses, face shields or masks with visor attachments). More info here.

If there is at least 2 confirmed COVID-19 cases, continuous use of eye protection (e.g. goggles, face-shield) is recommended for all staff and designated visitors providing direct resident care or working in resident care areas.

For Individuals
Call 811 for access to PPE
For Congregate Care Sites
To request PPE supplies please complete the online request form to advise them of your PPE needs here.

Additional resources:
- Daily Fit for Work Screening Protocol
- Guidelines for PPE
- Point of Care Risk Assessment

Shared Spaces

- Place posters regarding physical distancing, hand-hygiene and limiting the spread in areas where they are likely to be seen.

Dining Protocols
- Ensure individuals and staff **wash their hands** before and after handling food and eating.
- **Minimize** the size of the group of individuals eating at any one time.
- **Reduce** the number of individuals eating at a table to a maximum of two (2).
- **Remove** shared food containers from dining areas. (e.g. coffee, water)
- **Provide** single serve packets, provide directly to the individual. (e.g. sugar, ketchup)
- **Remove** any self-serve food items.

Program Planning

- To help **plan activities**, staff should **ask themselves** the **following questions** to determine the risk level of the activities and whether they are allowed to proceed:
  - Does the activity violate a public health order?
  - Does the activity involve shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands?
  - Can an activity be modified to increase opportunities for physical distancing?
- As per physical distancing requirements, activities requiring group transportation should not occur.

Stagger lunch/snack breaks to promote physical distancing among participants.

Employment Standards

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act
Every **employer** shall ensure, as far as it is reasonably practicable for the employer to do so, ensure the **health and safety and welfare** of:

- o workers engaged in the work of that employer;
- o those workers not engaged in the work of that employer but present at the work site at which that work is being carried out; and
- o other persons at or in the vicinity of the work site who may be affected by hazards originating from the work site.

OHS Regulation
An employer must ensure that workers who may be **required to use** safety equipment or personal protective equipment are competent in the application, care, use, maintenance and limitations of that equipment.

Funding and Other Resources

This website for non-profit and community organizations support provides information on grant funding programs and charitable donation matching programs for organizations supporting vulnerable Albertans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A number of websites offer information on fundraising, volunteering and human resources, crisis communications resources, policy updates at the provincial and federal levels, peer connection opportunities and mental health supports. These include:
- Alberta Non-profit Network
- Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)
- Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)