



To: Providers of Certified Residential Settings

From: Leslie Fuld, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Quality Improvement

Date: May 18, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Risk Stratified Enhanced Oversight

The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) appreciates the ongoing efforts of each agency and agency staff to provide services and supports to individuals when daily lives have significantly changed. In addition to necessary changes in activities and personal behaviors, you may also be impacted by the COVID-19 illness of individuals, staff members, and their families and communities.

The health and well-being of individuals is of utmost importance to OPWDD. OPWDD is committed to supporting agencies to have the information and guidance needed to continue to support individuals while preventing the spread of COVID-19. Written guidance is frequently updated on the OPWDD website <https://opwdd.ny.gov/coronavirus-guidance>.

In addition, OPWDD is engaged in enhanced oversight activities to support the health and well-being of individuals living in and staff working in certified residences. The Division of Quality Improvement (DQI) will provide tools and support agencies/facilities to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of infection control measures and COVID-19 response strategies within the residences. These activities include:

- Requests for and review of agency procedures including any trainings developed and implemented for prevention, identification, containment, and management of COVID-19;
- Distribution of tools for self-assessment of facility practices
- Distribution of daily checklists to:
 - Monitor and assist in the early identification of change in an individual's status
 - Assist as a reminder of infection control practices necessary daily or each shift; and,
- Site visits to a sample of residences to provide more direct and immediate guidance to ensure people's health and well-being. With respect to these site visits:
 - DQI staff visiting the residences are trained in required infection control practices in accordance with the New York State Department of Health guidelines and will complete the on-site visit adhering to those practices. Staff will be self-monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 daily prior to visits and will be using and changing appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE);

- The visits are intended to be focused on COVID-19 responses. However, if there is evidence of serious health and safety issues, DQI staff must act to ensure it is addressed.

Please contact the Bureau of Program Certification Area Office responsible for oversight of your facilities if you have any questions regarding your specific residences. General questions can be sent to quality@opwdd.ny.gov.