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The COVID-19 public health crisis is rapidly changing. This information represents the most up to date information we had at the time of publishing. We will update as new information becomes available.

April 2, 2020

Q- Are NYSTART Services available to only people currently enrolled in the service?

- A- Yes, all supports are available virtually via phone, facetime, Zoom, and Skype. Emergency support through the Emergency Support line or the primary coordinator.

Q- How much support and engagement are NYSTART providing to OPWDD individuals who are admitted to the hospital due to symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19?

- A- NYSTART Teams report that they are supporting members virtual. Working with medical teams by providing information and resources, as well as participating in meeting with the medical staff.

Q- Is NYSTART accepting new referrals?

- A- Currently Region 4 and 5 are accepting referrals. Region 4 consists of 2 NYSTART Teams (YAI & SUS). They cover Manhattan, Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island. Region 5 is Long Island. Region 3 (Capital District, Taconic and Hudson Valley) is awaiting guidance.

Q- How do Members and Families receive information from the Day Providers or Residential Providers regarding their updates on supports and services?

- A- Care Design NY is working with the agencies and Provider Associations to bring needed information to the individuals and families we mutually serve. We will encourage providers to provide updated, timely information regarding modification of services to the individuals and families they support. We are also working to collect this information internally via a provider survey so that it is available to our Care Managers and by extension, the individuals and families we support.

Q- How do Member and Families find services medical/ behavioral supports available to them in the community?

- A-Individuals and families should work with their Care Managers to obtain needed medical/behavioral supports. Care Design NY has also created an online search tool community resources available to individuals and families during the COVID-19 crisis. The tool can be accessed here: [emergency resources search tool](#)

Q- How do Member and Families know if the services are available to people specifically with IDD?

- A-- The above-mentioned online search tool is currently being customized so that services available specifically to the I/DD population are designated appropriately.

Q- What is the guidance of Members' having visitors at the Hospital if they are admitted?

A- The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) issued new visitation policies for hospital visitors and caregivers effective March 18, 2020 to address the COVID 19 outbreak. All patient visitation has been suspended except:

- When medically necessary and visitor is essential to the patient's care.
- The visitor is a family member or legal representative of a patient in an imminent end-of-life situation; or
- For a visitor of a woman in labor, an infant in the neonatal ICU, or a pediatric patient.

In addition:

- Any visitors meeting these exceptions must be screened for symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, or fever) or potential exposure to someone with COVID-19 and the duration and number of visits should be minimized.

It may be necessary to share these guidelines around visitation as additional support from caregivers and families may be deemed medically necessary by a healthcare provider based on the healthcare needs of the person.

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/03/doh_covid19_obpedsvisitation_032720.pdf

Q- What protocol are DSP's following in regard to PPE in the Residential Settings or Com Hab. staff that come into a Members home?

- A- OPWDD sent out COVID 19 guidance on 3/14/2020 that speaks to utilizing facemasks when there are confirmed or suspected cases of exposure in the residence. Guidance issued on 3/25/2020 speaks to general management of Coronavirus and covers infection control practices and ways to reduce transmission as well as the use of PPE and cleaning and disinfection guidelines

Q- If families have a loved one at their home and the Member would like to return to their home will the residence allow them to come home? What does this procedure look like for the Member and the DSP's that work in the residential setting?

- A- The guidance from OPWDD indicates that if the loved one went home with family prior to 3/25 at 5pm – and the person should be able to return. The individual should be screened for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and have their temperature measured. Please note that any individual returning to their residential facility after the implementation of this directive, may require up to fourteen days of precautionary quarantine within that setting, depending on their community exposure. Decisions as to whether or not a returning individual should be held in precautionary quarantine should be made with consultation by the local Department of Health. If the loved one went home after 3/25 at 5pm, the expectation is that they remain at home with family until the restriction is lifted by OPWDD.

Q- Will the Member's Benefits be affected by going home to stay with family during this time period?

- A- This depends on individual situations. Generally speaking, benefits should not be impacted by this temporary change due to COVID-19; however, representative payees are required to report changes in living arrangements to Social Security – they should report this as a temporary change explain that the person is still responsible for paying rent. This should allow payments to continue and the residential provider should make arrangements with families to provide some financial support to help them meet the needs of their family members while they are caring for them and the residence is not.

Medicaid coverage should remain intact for anyone who had active coverage on 3/18/2020, regardless of any notices received. There is to be no negative action taken regarding Medicaid eligibility, so this allows for a great deal of flexibility in ensuring the person still has access to Medicaid-funded services. If notices about case closings are received, families/individuals should reach out directly to their CM, who in turn should contact their Benefits & Entitlements Specialist for assistance with the necessary actions. Expiration dates for Medicaid for cases set to expire in March, April, May and June 2020 are being extended by 3 months. We expect the extension to be longer, but NYS is waiting for approval of a Federal waiver for that to occur.

Q- Will there be any effect on the stimulus check to the Benefits of the Members?

- A- We are monitoring the IRS and SSA information to be able to share with all who need the information. Until official guidelines are published, we cannot be certain how each of the provisions of the CARES Act will be applied/interpreted; that said, stimulus payments are

typically exempt as income and then exempt from resources for a period of time. While we do not have the details yet, we do NOT anticipate impacts to individuals' benefits as these payments are intended to assist individuals during this time rather than negatively impact them. As soon as we have the information from the source and can provide links for reliable and useful information about the payments, we will be certain to share. Please stay tuned! Kristina Cunningham will be on the agenda to discuss these payments further next week and we hope to have more concrete information at that time.