

June 26, 2020

To: All DCS Contracted Congregate Care Providers

From: Mike Faust, Director

Re: Enhanced requirements for Congregate Care settings.

DCS would like to provide some additional guidance and clarification of requirements during this public health crisis. The items listed below are not exhaustive but address several of the topics that providers have escalated to the Department for clarity. If you have question please contact Gillian Vanasse (Gillian.vanasse@azdcs.gov) or Thea Bish (thea.bish@azdcs.gov).

- Conduct health screening for all individuals entering the facility
  - Screening shall include:
    - Temperature checks
    - Questionnaire regarding any recent symptoms consistent with COVID-19
    - Questionnaire regarding contact with known COVID-19 positive individual in the last 14 days.
  - All individuals entering the facility shall receive a screenings including but not limited to:
    - Group Home staff
    - DCS staff
    - Youth returning from activity outside the home
- Facial Coverings should be worn by all individuals entering the home who do not reside at the property including GH staff.
  - Youth are not required to wear a facial covering while in the home
  - If the GH is a house parent model, the house parent is not required to wear a facial covering in the home with the children,
- Ensure age appropriate conversations occur to support children and youth understanding as to current conditions of COVID-19 in Arizona. Communicate limits on normalcy activities are due to the care and concern for the children and youth, as not to be seen as punitive actions.
- DCS supports activities outside of the GH for youth that promote normalcy. Creating an exhaustive list of activities is not possible but some guidance includes:

**\*\* Since facial coverings are a requirement in most jurisdictions, all Group Home should review the expectation with youth regarding wearing a facial covering, practicing physical distancing and practicing good hand hygiene. \*\*\***

- Youth should be permitted to maintain employment outside of the home including active efforts to find new employment
- Large group gatherings including trips to the grocery store, mall and other activities should be prohibited.
- In-person visitation with parents are continuing but should be limited to parents only
  - This requirement has been clarified with DCS Field and Supervised Visitation Providers.
- Transitional visits and home passes should be reviewed with the program manager and program administrator.
  - If the visits have been occurring over the past several weeks/months they should continue.
  - If newly established, it may be permissible to delay the start of the activities.
- Mentoring activities may continue and Group Home staff should engage with the Mentor on the activities that will occur while the youth is outside of the home and the Mentor should follow proper safety guidelines (Facial covering, physical distancing, etc) while with the youth.
  - When determining if mentoring should continuing, consider whether or not the mentor is the primary adult relationship
- Unsupervised free time away from the home should be limited at this time
  - Recognition of some peer contact will occur, document contact, and support youth's understanding of the use of facial covering, and safety precautions

The below direction addresses many of the situations that arise when youth are exposed, symptomatic, pending test result or received test results. If a particular situation is not addressed below, then please escalate to [Gillian.vanasse@azdcs.gov](mailto:Gillian.vanasse@azdcs.gov) or [CMDPCOVID19@azdcs.gov](mailto:CMDPCOVID19@azdcs.gov)

- If a child is exposed to a known positive person or is symptomatic, the child needs to be tested for COVID-19
  - Please follow the instructions of the Primary Care Physician, quarantine the child and have them wear a mask.
  - Some Primary Care Physicians will request that testing is conducted only when symptoms are present. DCS is requiring, because of the congregate setting, that the child is tested.
  - Exposed means in contact with an individual who is confirmed to be positive and the child was within 6ft for 10 or more consecutive minutes.
  - If barriers exist for conducting tests please escalate to [CMDPCOVID19@azdcs.gov](mailto:CMDPCOVID19@azdcs.gov)
- While waiting for test results:
  - The child should wear a facial covering whenever they cannot physically distance
  - All children residing in the home should participate in virtual visits until the test results are received.
  - Access to the group home should be restricted to GH staff only. DCS staff will defaulted to conducting conduct monthly contacts virtually. However DCS staff may require access to child and/or home.

- Positive test results:
  - In all situations where positive test results have been confirmed for any one of the children placed in the home, all in-person contact and in-person visitation should be moved to virtual for 10 days AND until 3 days have passed since the following symptoms have resolved: fever, chills, rigors (chills with shaking) and body/muscle aches, without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (including cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell), whichever occurs later.
  - DCS staff will defaulted to conducting conduct monthly contacts virtually. However DCS staff may require access to child and/or home.