



April 10, 2020

Dear Congregate Care Provider,

Essential providers like you have been asking a lot of questions about COVID 19 and requesting guidance in anticipation of residents/staff becoming ill. You are not alone in trying to navigate these situations and we want you to know that we are here to support you through these challenging times. You provide a vital service to our community. Attached are the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for congregate care settings. We know these guidelines are sometimes difficult to interpret. That is why we are here locally to assist you in these challenging times. Our shared goal is to keep residents in their congregate care settings whenever possible, if they do not need hospital level of care.

We have assigned a public health liaison as your primary point of contact for disease prevention and control guidance as well as isolation and quarantine recommendations. We also have two isolation and quarantine nurse consultants who can work with you for more specific advice.

Your Public Health Liaison is: **Raymond Jobe**

During regular business hours (8am-4:30 pm) contact information:

218-260-5513

jober@stlouiscountymn.gov

To contact outside of regular business hours from 7:00 am – 7:00 pm, 7 days a week, please use the Minnesota Department of Health: 1-800-657-3903

We want to support your plans for residents isolating and quarantining in place to the extent possible.

1. If after consulting with the St. Louis County Public Health Division, through the PH liaisons and nurse consultants, there is not an option to isolate/quarantine in place then;
2. We encourage you to consider alternate means to isolate/quarantine your residents (e.g. hotel vouchers). If this is not an option then;
3. We will work with you to determine if the temporary housing site for isolation and quarantine (through our current contracted units in Duluth, Virginia, Hibbing or Ely) is appropriate for your resident.
4. Regardless of the location of isolation/quarantine, oversight of your resident's well-being in a temporary housing site would still be an expectation of your organization.

Some additional practical tips for your current preparation efforts:

- If you do not have an isolation and quarantine policy or plan, it is time to write one that is specific to your location and specific needs. Please work with your licensing agency, follow MDH guidance and consult with us as needed.
 - As part of this plan consider three scenarios – individuals waiting for test results, individuals with lab confirmed COVID 19 positive results who need to individually isolate (or cohort isolate with other confirmed positive cases) and your plans to individually quarantine close contacts.
- We know that availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be a concern to you. There is evolving guidance around alternatives and strategies if you do not have the recommended PPE. St. Louis County is starting a list of organizations who need PPE. This list does not provide guarantees, but if it becomes available it will be distributed based on need. Please fill out this survey if you have PPE needs that you are unable to meet:
<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/c5431f40c4484c32b7ef86be22c6a754>
- If your setting does not support the needs necessary for proper I & Q, we are here to help strategize alternatives. There is funding available to help cover the expenses to provide I & Q in alternate settings (such as hotel vouchers); learn more here:
<https://headinghomealliance.com/funding-resources-for-covid-response/>.
- In addition to this local Public Health support, any positive COVID 19 lab test results in a response from the Minnesota Department of Health which includes contact investigation and further support for anyone who may have been exposed.

Please call your PH liaison if you have questions about COVID-19 or how to interpret any of the health guidelines being recommended.

St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services

is here to work alongside you as you navigate response to COVID 19.

<https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/covid19>

***Your organization is a key partner in protecting and promoting community health!
As the COVID-19 situation, prevention recommendations and guidance rapidly evolves, find accurate, up to date information here:***

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): <https://www.health.state.mn.us/>,

Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
