



October 23, 2020

Interim COVID-19 Guidance: Designated Cluster Mitigation and Oversight

The Governor and the NYS Department of Health (DOH) have begun to identify geographic areas with higher than average rates of COVID-19 transmission, referred to as “hot spots,” “clusters,” and “micro clusters.” The risk of transmission is characterized by three colors (red, orange and yellow) and the level of mitigation management is increased as geographic areas demonstrate higher rates of infection and move along the continuum from yellow to orange to red.

Programs and facilities certified or operated by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), located within such designated geographic areas, will immediately be subject to the following additional mitigation and oversight measures. These restrictions are required in addition to all other applicable OPWDD COVID-19 guidance.

1. Provider Notification

Upon designation by the Governor of a geographic COVID-19 cluster, or upon the change of any such designation, OPWDD will notify providers operating programs within the designated area to ensure that the provider is aware of the high rate designation and is taking all appropriate precautions. This notification will be made as part of OPWDD’s risk stratified enhanced oversight as well as review of any previous COVID visits to determine the need for any oversight actions required for that program.

2. Enhanced Testing

All providers offering services within a designated area of concern will be required to refer staff and individuals served for COVID-19 testing on a weekly basis and to strongly encourage/facilitate such testing. The use of rapid molecular tests (i.e. the Abbott ID NOW) may be considered when testing individuals and/or staff associated with congregate settings such as group homes and day programs, in addition to lab-based molecular testing. More information regarding the interim recommendations for use of molecular testing during the COVID-19 public health emergency is available at: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-testing>.

All positive testing results are required to be reported to OPWDD using the Incident Report and Management Application (IRMA).

3. Program Suspension/Reduction

In those geographic areas with the highest rate of transmission (designated as a “red” or “orange” geographic cluster), site-based day services will be temporarily suspended. Community-based group services in those same geographic regions will be temporarily

reduced in capacity. Capacity reductions are inclusive of individuals receiving services and staff needed to operate such programs.

Restrictions will continue, consistent with the NYS DOH closure restrictions for businesses, until the red or orange designation from the geographic area is modified. Programs contained within the yellow designated areas may continue to operate but weekly testing is highly encouraged. In cases where an individual resides in a certified residential program and attends certified day services, the residential provider should be responsible for referring the individual for testing in order to avoid duplicative testing.

The scope of enhanced testing and program suspensions/reduction is summarized in the following tables:

Type of Activity	RED	ORANGE	YELLOW
<u>Certified Site-Based Day Services</u> (day habilitation, site-based prevocational services, site-based respite, pathway to employment)	SUSPENDED	SUSPENDED	OPEN -In compliance with OPWDD’s Interim Guidance for Day Services Reopening and the Day Program Reopening Safety Plans -Weekly Testing Recommended
<u>Group Non-Site-Based Services</u> (day habilitation without walls, community based prevocational services, non-site-based respite, community habilitation-group, supported employment-group)	SUSPENDED	OPEN -10 Person capacity (inclusive of individuals and staff) -Weekly Testing Recommended	OPEN -In compliance with OPWDD’s Interim Guidance for Day Services Reopening and the Day Program Reopening Safety Plans -Weekly Testing Recommended

<p><u>Non-Group Non-Site-Based Services</u> (services provided to 1-3 individuals: community habilitation, respite, employment training, SEMP, community based prevocational services)</p>	<p>OPEN</p> <p>-2 Person capacity (inclusive of individuals and staff)</p> <p>-Weekly Testing Recommended</p>	<p>OPEN</p> <p>-4 Person capacity (inclusive of individuals and staff)</p> <p>-Weekly Testing Recommended</p>	<p>OPEN</p> <p>Weekly Testing Recommended</p>
<p><u>Residential</u> (certified residences, free standing respite, day services and community habilitation being temporarily delivered in a certified residence)</p>	<p>OPEN</p> <p>-visitation suspended</p> <p>-Weekly Testing Recommended</p>	<p>OPEN</p> <p>-visitation based on COVID status of home</p> <p>-Weekly Testing Recommended</p>	<p>OPEN</p> <p>Weekly Testing Recommended</p>

4. Visitation Suspension

Visitation to OPWDD certified residential facilities within the designated geographic clusters will be suspended in accordance with the DOH health advisory, All Residential Congregate Facilities, issued on October 23, 2020.