

Dear Staff:

At present the Arc Sullivan-Orange Counties **does not** have a confirmed case of COVID-19 caused by the novel coronavirus in our agency. However, we are aware of concerns in the community about the spread of this relatively new virus and wish to share some important information with you.

Our Executive Management Team is closely monitoring this fluid situation and following guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Orange & Sullivan County Departments of Health, and New York State OPWDD.

Based on recent reports, there are 105 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New York State at the time of this letter, most of which are centered on the downstate area with single digit cases in the Hudson Valley and Capital Region. If we become aware that an individual served or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, The Arc Sullivan-Orange will immediately notify staff and parents/guardians. If a person supported or staff member shows respiratory symptoms, we will follow our current practices for handling respiratory illnesses, subject to any additional guidance forthcoming.

The Arc Sullivan-Orange has infectious disease protocols in place and routinely takes steps, such as cleaning and disinfecting surfaces throughout all main locations, including day and residential programs, to minimize the spread of viruses and a variety of other illnesses.

There are a number of steps that individuals, staff, and community members can take to minimize the spread of all respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, according to the state Department of Health:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Heavily soiled hands should be washed.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you or a family member begin showing symptoms of a respiratory disease and suspect it may be COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider. Before going to your healthcare provider's office, inform them that a case of COVID-19 is suspected, and follow their advice.

It is essential to note that staff who participate in agency sponsored health insurance have the option to utilize Teladoc at no cost to them (www.teladoc.com, or download from the apple or android app store).

The service allows for telephone and video consults with a physician in minutes. We encourage any staff member who suspects they may be ill to utilize Teladoc before making any visits to Emergency Rooms/Urgent Care Centers or a regular healthcare provider office.

Achieve with us.



Sullivan-Orange Counties
New York

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A Chapter of The Arc New York

Steven Drobysch
President

J. Richard Schwartz
Executive Director

Staff should take the following actions if you live with someone, or have had close contact with someone who has been confirmed to have the virus, or if you suspect you have the virus, or are confirmed to have a case of the virus:

- Contact your healthcare provider and discuss your options for testing
- Until testing is complete you should quarantine yourself from friends, family, pets, and the workplace. Current best practice calls for a quarantine period of 14 days

Points of contact for staff with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 are:

- Deborah Speer 845-796-1350 x 1306 dspeer@arcsullivanorange.org
- Lori Lippert 845-796-1350 x 1304 llippert@arcsullivanorange.org

Families are also encouraged to follow the CDC's information for travel, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>. For more information, consider consulting these additional resources:

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>
- Travel: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/faqs.html>
- COVID-19: What is Stigma and What Causes It?
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html?CDC_AA_reVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fstigma-faq.html
- Prevention, Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>
- New York State Department of Health information
<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

In addition, New York has established a Novel Coronavirus Hotline, which can provide additional information. Call **1-888-364-3065** with questions or concerns about travel and symptoms.

The Arc Sullivan-Orange Counties will continue to share information as it becomes available.

Please know that, as always the health and safety of the people we support and staff is our highest priority, and we will remain vigilant in our efforts to help prevent the spread of all respiratory illnesses including COVID-19/Novel Coronavirus.

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Your health and wellbeing is important to us, as is the health, safety and wellbeing of the people we support. We recognize that this is a stressful time for many people, with much unknown about this virus and its potential impact. We are committed to sharing as much information as we can, and providing support where we can. We ask that staff take appropriate and reasonable precautions, and rely on sound medical advice when making a decision about quarantine or isolation. We know, as you do, that your presence at work allows the people we support to live as valued and respected members of the community, and appreciate your commitment to our mission through times both good and bad.

Sincerely,

J. Richard Schwartz
Executive Director

Achieve with us.