



NORTHEAST
CONTEMPORARY
SERVICES, INC.

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**COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS PLAN FOR
NORTHEAST CONTEMPORARY SERVICES, INC. (NCSI)
Revised June 4, 2020**

Introduction

NCSI consumers are the reason we exist to provide services. Our Mission is in the forefront of how we provide these services. Empowering our consumers to remain safe and healthy is of utmost importance in achieving our mission. NCSI staff are important assets and we are serious about keeping our staff safe and healthy.

NCSI's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan adheres to current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines on COVID-19, federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards related to COVID-19, and Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) licensing requirements.

The CDC and MDH use the term “at higher risk” to describe persons who may experience greater illness if they acquire COVID-19, due to their age or underlying health conditions. DHS uses the term “vulnerable adult” to describe adults served by licensed disability-focused organizations such as NCSI. Being described as “vulnerable” by DHS does not necessarily mean that one is “at higher risk” of becoming severely ill if they contract COVID-19. The higher risk status depends upon age or whether underlying health conditions exist, and one’s ability to follow safe and healthy practices. The CDC considers people “at higher risk” if they are: 65 years and older; any age with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including people with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, with serious heart conditions, who are immunocompromised, with severe obesity, with diabetes, with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, with liver disease. Pursuant to Emergency Executive Order 20-55, at the present time, people at higher risk are strongly urged to stay at home.

All staff are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19, and establish and maintain health and safety, in our workplace and community; this requires full cooperation among our staff, consumers and their interdisciplinary team members, and visitors.

Screening and Provisions for Staff Exhibiting Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

- Staff have been informed of and are required to self-monitor for the following signs and symptoms of COVID-19:
 - Fever (100.4 or higher), or feeling feverish
 - Chills
 - New and persistent dry cough
 - Difficulty breathing (unable to hold breath for 20-30 seconds)
 - New sore throat
 - New muscle aches
 - New headache
 - New loss of smell or taste

When any of these symptoms are present, the staff must notify the executive director and stay at home until the symptoms have subsided for a minimum of three consecutive days, without the use of medications.

- Upon arrival each day, staff will be required to take and record their temperature using a no-touch thermometer. Staff with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be allowed to work.
- Staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 while at work will immediately report to the executive director, sign out, and leave the premises. They must stay at home until the symptoms have subsided for a minimum of three consecutive days, without the use of medications.
- Staff with ongoing COVID-19 symptoms are strongly encouraged to contact their health care provider. Should they be tested for COVID-19 and receive a positive diagnosis, they must inform the executive director immediately and not report to work until 14 calendar days have passed since the day of initial symptoms.
- Staff with a household member who has been tested and has received a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 must immediately inform the executive director and not report to work until 14 calendar days have passed since the day of initial symptoms.
- NCSI has leave policies for NCSI Employees that promote staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. NCSI Employees may be eligible for Paid Time Off and other benefits as described in NCSI's Employee Handbook. NCSI has posted information for NCSI Employees regarding the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

Screening and Provisions for Consumers Exhibiting Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

- Consumers and their parents/guardians/residential providers have been informed of and are required to self-monitor for the following signs and symptoms of COVID-19:
 - Fever (100.4 or higher), or feeling feverish
 - Chills
 - New and persistent dry cough
 - Difficulty breathing (unable to hold breath for 20-30 seconds)
 - New sore throat
 - New muscle aches
 - New headache

- New loss of smell or taste

When any of these symptoms are present, the consumer or her/his parent/guardian/residential provider must notify the executive director and the consumer must stay at home until the symptoms have subsided for a minimum of three consecutive days, without the use of medications.

- Upon arrival each day, consumers will be required to have their temperature taken and recorded using a no-touch thermometer. If a consumer has a temperature of 100.4 or higher, s/he will be isolated on-site and transportation to return the consumer home will be arranged or provided.
- If a consumer exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 while at NCSI, it will be immediately reported to the executive director. The consumer will be isolated on-site and their emergency contact will be called and transportation to return the consumer home will be arranged or provided. The consumer must stay home until the symptoms have subsided for a minimum of three consecutive days, without the use of medications.
- Consumers who have been tested for COVID-19 and have received a positive diagnosis or are presumed to have a positive diagnosis must immediately inform the executive director and then stay home until 14 calendar days have passed since the day of initial symptoms.
- Consumers with a household member who has been tested and has received a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 must immediately inform the executive director and then stay home until 14 calendar days have passed since the day of initial symptoms.

Notification of Exposure to COVID-19

- If a staff or consumer is diagnosed with COVID-19 or there is a presumption of a positive test result, the executive director will follow the MDH and CDC guidelines specific to the situation.
- The executive director shall notify all staff, consumers or their parents/guardians/residential providers, and consumers' social workers about a potential exposure to an individual who has contracted COVID-19. Depending upon the level of risk exposure to the individual with COVID-19, staff and consumers may be required to stay home until 14 calendar days have passed since the day of exposure.
- The notification will protect the confidentiality of the individual who has contracted COVID-19, according to NCSI's Data Privacy Policy.

Handwashing and Sanitary Practices

- Staff and consumers will wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially upon arrival and prior to departure each day, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet.
- Our facilities have hand-sanitizer (greater than 60% alcohol) that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.
- Staff will aid consumers who need it in washing hands or using hand-sanitizer.

- All visitors to our facilities will be required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering our facilities.
- Gloves (provided by NCSI) will be worn by all staff at all times when consumers are on-site.
- If desired, clothing covers and shoe covers will be provided to staff upon request.
- Consumers will be asked to provide their own writing utensils (markers, pens, pencils, etc.) for personal use. If this is a barrier for a consumer, NCSI will make a good faith effort to provide the consumer with a set of writing utensils for personal use.
- When participating in group activities using shared equipment, staff will disinfect the shared equipment before and after group use.
- Handwashing and Sanitary Practices will be demonstrated on posters and role-modeled by staff.

Respiratory Etiquette

- Staff, consumers, and visitors are instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available in every area of our facilities.
- Staff must wear face masks while transporting consumers, whether in NCSI, Newtrax or NCSI Employees' private vehicles. If a staff feels that their ability to drive will be obstructed in any way while wearing a mask (i.e., driver wears glasses and vision would be obstructed while driving and wearing a mask due to fogging of the glasses), that staff may remove the mask while driving (if they are driving a vehicle with a driver barrier) and place it back on when assisting consumers or exiting the vehicle. If clear communication with a consumer is impeded by a staff wearing a mask, that staff may remove the mask while communicating.
- Consumers must wear face masks while being driven for any purpose associated with NCSI's services (route transportation, job rides, community outings), whether in NCSI, Newtrax, Metro Mobility or NCSI Employees' private vehicles.
- Staff must wear face masks within our facilities and at all times when serving consumers. If clear communication with a consumer is impeded by a staff wearing a mask, that staff may remove the mask while communicating.
- Once settled in their cohorts, consumers are strongly encouraged, but not required, to wear face masks within our facilities and at all times when being served by NCSI.
- Visitors must wear face masks within our facilities.
- NCSI will provide each staff with two face masks. Staff may acquire and use personal face masks. Staff must ensure face masks are sanitized using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at www.cdc.gov or the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) at www.health.state.mn.us.

- Consumers are asked to acquire their own personal face masks. If this is a barrier for a consumer, NCSI will make a good faith effort to provide the consumer with a face mask(s). Consumers or their parents/guardians or residential providers must ensure the consumers' face masks are sanitized using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at www.cdc.gov or the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) at www.health.state.mn.us. If this is a barrier for a consumer, NCSI will make a good faith effort to sanitize the consumer's face mask(s).
- If preferred, staff, consumers and visitors may wear face shields instead of face masks.
- Face masks/shields cannot be shared with others.
- Consumers employed in community-based jobs will be required to follow the COVID-19 preparedness plan as mandated by their employers.
- Respiratory Etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and role-modeled by staff.

Physical Distancing

- The number of consumers riding on vehicles for route transportation provided by NCSI and Newtrax will be reduced to no more than 4-6 consumers per vehicle and/or no more than one passenger per seat; seating charts will be used.
- Arrival and departure protocols will include physical distancing strategies and other mitigation efforts, including staggering of arrival and departure times and minimizing congregating in groups at transition times.
- Facility occupancy will be limited to no more than 50% of the licensed capacity or a maximum of 50 people at a time, including staff, whichever is smaller.
- Services will be delivered in shifts with a maximum duration of three hours (not including route transportation).
- NCSI will create and maintain consistent cohorts of the same staff and consumers. Cohorts will consist of 10 or fewer people, including staff. Physical environments will be adapted to adhere to this group size in individual rooms throughout our facilities.
- Staff, consumers and visitors will be strongly reminded to keep 6-foot distances while engaged in all NCSI services, including group activities, lunch/leisure, and community outings.
- Seating spaces will be arranged to maximize the space between consumers with at least 6 feet between seats. Whenever possible, seating will be turned in the same direction (rather than facing each other).
- Communal food and sharing of food will not be permitted until further notice.
- Shaking hands, hugging, fist bumps, high fives and other physical forms for greetings or celebrations will not be allowed.

- Large meetings will be held remotely (teleconference, videoconference).
- In-person meetings will be held as necessary; participants will use physical distancing strategies and wear masks.
- Staff using shared office space will use physical distancing strategies.
- Physical Distancing strategies will be demonstrated on posters and role-modeled by staff.

Housekeeping

- NCSI facilities are deep-cleaned by a professional cleaning company each weeknight.
- NCSI and Newtrax vehicles will be sanitized by the driver between routes and disinfected at the end of each day.
- Staff will be required to disinfect high-touch areas throughout the service day, including tables and other surfaces, chairs, door handles/knobs/push bars, light switches, handles of restroom sinks/stall doors/toilets, handrails, phones, computer equipment, controls, and copy machines.
- Types of disinfectant products used will comply with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- If a staff or consumer is diagnosed with COVID-19, NCSI facilities will be treated with Electrostatic Disinfection.

Communications and Training

This Preparedness Plan is provided via various methods (in-person, via mail, via email, via facility posting, and/or via NCSI Website posting) to staff, consumers and their parents/guardians/residential providers, and consumers' social workers. This plan is available to the DHS Commissioner upon request. All staff are trained to their duties in implementing this plan and this training is documented.

The implementation of this plan is monitored and the plan will be revised when a need for revision is identified. NCSI staff, consumers and their interdisciplinary team members are encouraged to share any concerns with this plan directly with the executive director. Any shared suggestions and feedback will be seriously considered for possible integration into any future versions of the plan. The executive director and supervisors will monitor the effectiveness of program implementation, and training will be updated/added and delivered as necessary.

Certified by:
Jennifer Freeburg
Executive Director