

March 26, 2020

Aging & Adult Services Division
Information for Agency and Individual Qualified Service Providers (QSPs)
Providing in home services during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.

Q. What is COVID-19?

- It is a new illness spreading around the world
- Its nickname is Coronavirus

Q. How do you get it?

- Someone with COVID-19 can transmit their germs when they cough or sneeze. Germs get into your body through your mouth, nose, and your eyes.
- COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Q. What happens if you have it?

- A fever of 100.4 or higher
- Hard time breathing
- Coughing
- Most people who get sick with COVID-19 will have only mild illness and should recover at home.
- Caring for yourself at home can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and help protect people who are at risk for getting seriously ill from COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age with certain serious underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes are [at higher risk](#) for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness and should seek care as soon as symptoms start.

Q. How can I stay healthy?

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - And after conducting client care.
- Clean high touch surfaces like sinks and counters in your home often.

Q. What can I do to help myself and my clients be prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Make sure they know where to get local information about COVID-19
 - ND Department of Health Hotline **1-866-207-2880** can provide information about COVID-19 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. 7 days a week.
 - If you need medical advice, contact your health care provider.
- Ask them if they have a household plan.
 - Do they have enough medications on hand?
 - Do they have adequate food and essentials for themselves and their pets?
 - Do they know how to get food delivered if necessary?
 - Do they have a list of important phone numbers and emergency contacts?
 - Ask for a copy of the list
- If you provide homemaker /shopping support, help them stock up on necessary items if possible.
 - Allowable homemaker tasks can include you assisting with ordering online grocery pick-up/ delivery etc.
 - Consider preparing additional meals to freeze if the consumer can warm up the meal.
- Do they have a backup plan to obtain needed care if you are unable to assist?
 - They may need to ask family or friends for help.
 - Tell the client and the case manager if you are unable to provide services.
 - If they cannot get care and they feel it's an emergency, call 911.

Q. What should QSP's be doing when it comes to this COVID -19 (Coronavirus)? My family and I are in the high-risk category and I'm concerned.

- QSPs can decide if they will provide a service to a consumer. Some providers may choose to limit or stop non-essential visits.
- If you are providing for a consumer who would be at risk without assistance and you are unable to provide services, you must contact the consumer and the case manager to discuss options.
- Remember, the most effective method for preventing the spread of COVID-19 continues to be handwashing. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; after conducting a home visit or completing a service visit.

Note: The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including Coronavirus. If available, facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of Coronavirus to help

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prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health care workers, and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility) if the person is symptomatic.

Please go to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html> for the latest information on COVID-19 and ways you can keep yourself and the people you serve as safe as possible while still providing these vital services.

Q. I work with several clients, and some of them have no other way to receive care. A consumer is requesting assistance with routine cleaning of their home. Can I limit my care to essential services only?

- QSPs can decide if they will provide a service to a consumer. Some providers may choose to limit or stop visits for non-essential visits.
- Regular routine housework visits can probably wait. One exception would be shopping assistance or meal prep for consumers without family or friends to assist.
- QSPs may need to give priority to those clients who do not have anyone else to care for them and need essential services like daily personal care to live safely at home.
- If you are providing for a consumer who would be at risk without assistance and you are unable to provide services, you must contact the client and the case manager to discuss options.

Q. The people I serve might be the ones who would be most affected. Is there any talk of QSP's being restricted to be able to go and assist clients in their homes?

- There is no restriction on QSP's being able to go into a client's home. Some consumers rely on these services to live safely. Providers can decide if they will provide a service to a consumer.
- QSPs may need to give priority to those clients who do not have anyone else to care for them and need essential services like daily personal care to live safely at home.
- If you are providing for a consumer who would be at risk without assistance you must contact the consumer and the case manager to discuss options.
- Please go to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html> for the latest information on COVID-19 and ways you can keep yourself and the people you serve as safe as possible while still providing these vital services.

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Q. I am wondering if there are any protocols set up for QSP's to help us know what to do when going into homes during the COVID -19 pandemic.

Below are pre-visit screening and preventative measures you might consider implementing before conducting a home visit. Call the individual to be served prior to visit to inquire about health status.

1. Has the individual to be served had close contact with someone with lab-confirmed COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

Yes _____ No _____

2. Has the Individual traveled outside of the country in the last 14 days?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Does the individual currently have any of the following symptoms (fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, or shortness of breath)?

Yes _____ No _____

4. Has the individual been tested for COVID-19 and received a lab-confirmed positive result for COVID-19?

Yes _____ No _____

5. Has the individual had any known contact with someone who is exhibiting symptoms (fever of 100.4, shortness of breath or persistent cough), or who has tested positive for COVID-19?

Yes _____ No _____

Based on responses, assess appropriateness of continuing with visit. If the individual to be served answers NO to all of the above questions, the visit can proceed. The home visit should observe all of the following precautions.

- Do not shake hands
- Do not accept food or drinks.
- Limit your contact to surfaces of the home.
- When completing paperwork, utilize a clip board and your own pen and not surfaces of the home (i.e., table, countertop).

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- Clean your cell phone and/or computer after the visit if you utilized either in the home, with disinfectant wipes
- Utilize hand sanitizer after the home visit and wash your hands with soap as soon as is practical.

If the **individual** to be served **answers YES to any** of the above questions, they should be directed to call their personal healthcare provider. They should report back to you what advice they were given about receiving care.

Q. I am a QSP and I think I have been exposed to someone who is now being tested for the COVID-19 virus. Should I be staying home and not provide services to my clients until I know if the test is negative?

- Healthy people who have been in contact with people who are being tested but are awaiting their results are able to work and do not need to be quarantined at this time. In general, everyone in North Dakota should be monitoring themselves for respiratory illness and staying home when sick.

Q. I am a QSP and I have been identified by public health as a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case or am a household contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case, what should I do?

If you had close contact (household, sexual, personal within 6 feet) with a confirmed COVID-19 case, you should stay home and self-isolate for 14 days. Close contacts should monitor their health; they should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath). Close contacts should also follow these recommendations:

- Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow their healthcare provider's instructions for medication(s) and care.
- Monitor the patient's symptoms. If the patient is getting sicker, call his or her healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.
- Household members should care for any pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.
- Perform hand hygiene frequently. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

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- If possible, the patient should wear a facemask when they are around other people. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), you, as the caregiver, should wear a mask when you are in the same room as the patient.
- If possible, wear a disposable facemask and gloves when you touch or have contact with the patient's blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine. Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.
- Avoid sharing household items with the patient. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly (see below "Wash laundry thoroughly").
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day.
- Wash laundry thoroughly. Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
- Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body.
- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste.

If you have additional questions about exposure to COVID-19 or whether to self-quarantine etc. Please call the Health Department Hotline **1-866-207-2880** or your Healthcare provider.

Q. What do I do if I feel sick?

- Doctors say if you are sick stay home.
- If you become too sick to provide the care you may need to ask family or friends to help.
- Call the client's case manager to discuss the situation.

If you have additional questions about exposure to COVID-19 or whether to self-quarantine etc. Please call the Health Department Hotline **1-866-207-2880** or your Healthcare provider.

Q. Will my QSP claims continue to be paid on time?

The Department will continue to process all claims as efficiently as possible. However, to avoid any delays in claims payment, it is highly recommended that you transition to online billing.

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For QSP enrollment related questions or to sign up for online billing:

Email: DSHCBS@ND.GOV

Fax: 701-328-4875

Phone: 701-328-4602

Instructions for online billing can be found at the following link. You need a User ID and Password, issued by the Department, prior to using the online billing system.

<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/mmis/docs/mmis-hcbs-web-portal-claims-submissionprocedures.pdf>

If you already bill online and need to reset your password or are having trouble logging in, please contact the Call Center at 1-877-328-7098.

When asked for a “pin”, please press “0” to talk to a live agent.

For more information visit the Department of Human Services Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information and Resources webpage at

<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/index.html>.

- ❖ **The website will be updated with the latest information available for providers, consumers, and their families.**

***Disclaimer:** These recommendations are based upon information available as of 3/23/2020. COVID-19 is an emerging disease. New knowledge is added daily, and guidance may change as the situation evolves. Please consult the CDC and North Dakota Department of Health websites regularly for the most up-to-date information. The information contained in this message is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Talk with your healthcare provider about any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Nothing contained in this document is intended to be used for medical diagnosis or treatment. The information provided by the Department should be treated as a resource only and should not be construed as medical or legal advice.*

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