



## INFORMATIONAL MEMO

---

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>COVID-19 COMMUNICATION FOR CDASS PARTICIPANTS</b>
<b>SUPERSEDES NUMBER:</b>	N/A
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	<b>MARCH 13, 2020</b>
<b>DIVISION AND OFFICE:</b>	<b>BENEFITS AND SERVICES MANAGEMENT DIVISION, OFFICE OF COMMUNITY LIVING</b>
<b>PROGRAM AREA:</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT DIRECTION SERVICES, HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED WAIVERS</b>
<b>KEY WORDS:</b>	<b>CDASS, COVID-19, PARTICIPANT DIRECTION</b>
<b>INFORMATIONAL MEMO NUMBER: HCPF IM 20-016</b>	
<b>ISSUE DATE: MARCH 13, 2020</b>	
<b>APPROVED BY: BONNIE SILVA</b>	

---

*HCPF Memo Series can be accessed online: <https://www.colorado.gov/hcpf/memo-series>*

### **Purpose and Audience:**

This document provides information on steps CDASS participants can take to manage their care and allocation during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. In addition, there are a list of actions members can take to help prevent COVID-19 from entering and spreading COVID-10 in your residence. All recommendations in this document are based on guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

### **Emergency options in development for CDASS Participants to manage their care needs:**

- 1. FMS Vendors will expedite new attendant paperwork** with a goal of approval within 24 hours.
- 2. In-person visits for Case Management assessments have been suspended.** Please work with your case manager to discuss options for completing assessments remotely.

**The Department is also pursuing flexibility in allowing paid sick time for attendants, suspension of overspending protocols, and the use of short-term home health for all individuals utilizing CDASS, in the event members are impacted by COVID-19. This change are currently with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and are not yet approved.**

**Additionally, the Department is hosting a stakeholder meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup> at 12-1 p.m. to discuss these issues and ask questions. You can join the webinar at <https://cohcpf.adobeconnect.com/r3b9fqgetn6z/> or call 1-877-820-7831 and use Participant Code 303146#.**

**Background on COVID-19:** COVID-19 is the abbreviated name for novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 that first emerged in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person through respiratory droplets.

The situation with this outbreak is evolving rapidly with new information being learned daily. The CDC is working closely with federal, state, and local health departments. We will issue additional guidance as it is available. The document is current with CDC guidance as of 3/12/20. Visit the CDC website for the latest updates:

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

**How it Spreads:** The coronavirus is thought to spread mainly from person to person, between people who are in close contact with each other (defined as within about six feet), and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. [Learn more about how COVID-19 spreads.](#)

**Symptoms:** The main symptoms are fever, coughing, and shortness of breath, just like the flu. Currently, CDC believes that symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. There is no reliable way to distinguish coronavirus symptoms from symptoms caused by the common flu, as both diseases can cause fever, coughs, and pneumonia in severe cases. A doctor may consider a flu test first, unless the person has been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Close contact is within six feet of someone for a prolonged period, such as through caring for, visiting, or sharing a room with someone who has the virus and being coughed on. Here is more information on symptoms.

**Treatment:** Currently, there are no vaccines or antiviral medications to prevent or cure COVID-19, however scientists are currently working on both. Comfort measures should be provided to help relieve symptoms.

#### **Steps to Prevent COVID-19 Include:**

- **Handwashing:** Reinforce best practices for 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.

- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains *at least* 60% alcohol.
  - Always wash your hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
  - Remind your staff to be extra vigilant when cleaning, performing housekeeping, and preparing food
- **Follow cough, sneeze and distance etiquette:** Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. This makes it more difficult for the virus to get from a surface to you. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then dispose of it immediately in a trash can.
  - **Cleaning:** Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces and objects daily, like tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, elevator buttons, phones, handrails, cabinet handles and other surfaces using cleaning products according to the manufacturer's instructions. [The EPA has posted a list of antimicrobial products](#) registered for use against the virus.
  - **Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** during close contact with someone in your community that may have COVID-19. Follow health department guidance and [check this CDC page to prepare](#). Currently, the CDC recommends standard, contact and droplet precautions, and using (1) facemasks (2) gowns; (3) gloves, and; (4) eye protection. If you do not have this equipment, it may be obtained through the following options:
    - a. **Primary care: Many primary care offices have some supplies of PPE available for distribution.** Physicians may distribute supplies through DME or other supply chain methods. Physicians may allow CDASS members or their attendants to pick up supplied from their offices.
    - b. Durable Medical Equipment (DME) suppliers: The Department allows physicians to prescribe PPE to people who receive CDASS for use by their attendants. DME providers would supply these items through regular methods.
    - c. Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies (SMES) benefits are available on the HCBS-EBD, BI, CMHS, and SLS waivers that can be used for PPE. The benefit includes items necessary for life support, ancillary supplies, and equipment.
    - d. Counties may be able to assist with masks or other supplies.  
<http://www.coemergency.com/p/local-info-sources.html>
  - **Post signs or communication instructing visitors not to visit** if they have (1) fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath). (2) International travel within the last 14 days, or (3) contact with an individual with COVID-19.
  - **Monitor your attendants with symptoms of respiratory illness:** Use sick time and encourage your attendants to stay home when ill. As part of routine practice, ask your attendants to regularly monitor themselves for fever and symptoms of respiratory

infection. If an attendant develops fever or symptoms of respiratory infection while at work, they should immediately put on a face mask and stop working.

**Communicate and Stay Informed:** Communicating with your family members, friends and attendants is critical. The more you communicate, the less likely they are to be stressed and speculate. Attendants may come to you with concerns based on misinformation. Rumors can spread like wildfire and incorrect information can do a lot of damage. Refer them to credible information such as the CDC website or the [CDPHE website](#).

1. **Reassure attendants and family members.** If attendants express concern, listening and validating concerns before offering advice or tips on precautions can help people through this process. Let family and friends know you have a plan and are taking precautions in your home.
2. **Educate** attendants, family members and visitors about prevention practices, response, and precautions implemented within the home and community to protect them and their loved ones, and actions they can take to protect themselves in the home. [Share the latest information about COVID-2019](#).
3. **Train.** Ensure attendants are trained on sources of exposure, prevention, recognizing symptoms, response when an outbreak has been identified, and communication protocols. Make sure attendants get the message to monitor and report any symptoms they have.
4. **Communicate with your attendants.** Tell attendants to speak up and stay home if they are not feeling well. You may want to check in at the beginning of work shifts to ask how attendants are feeling. This applies to any temporary or third-party health care providers as well. Review policies with when any other worker arrives. Keeping an infectious disease out of the community is worth the time.

**If you suspect a that you, a family member or attendant may have COVID-19, or exhibits [symptoms associated with the coronavirus](#), take the following steps:**

- **Place the person in a private room with a closed door.** Minimize the number of people who enter the room; ideally ONE person should be assigned or dedicated to working with that person. This minimizes the risk of transmission to other people.
- **Immediately contact the primary care physician** and, if applicable, notify the other emergency contacts as soon as practicable. (The emergency COVID-19 funding includes waivers on some Medicare restrictions on telehealth, so you may be able to avoid going to the doctor's office.)
- **Follow HIPAA guidelines** and protect the confidentiality of the individual wherever possible.
- **Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment** during close contact with someone in your community that may have COVID-19. Follow health department

guidance and [check this CDC page to prepare](#). Currently, the CDC recommends standard, contact and droplet precautions, and using (1) facemasks (2) gowns; (3) gloves, and; (4) eye protection. If you do not have this equipment, check with neighboring health facilities or contact your local health department if you are experiencing shortages. [The CDC has a plan in place to mitigate shortages](#)

- **If a physician recommends transport to a hospital** or treatment center, notify the hospital in advance that the person may be suspect of having COVID-19 so they can get their infection prevention plan into action. Similarly, notify EMS or an ambulance service in advance that the person they are transporting may be suspect of having COVID-19 so EMS personnel can be prepared.
- **Clean the room, disinfect surfaces and any equipment** you used on the suspected person before using it again.

### Be Prepared:

1. **Back-up Attendants:** Ensure you have back up attendants in case your regular attendants cannot work. Your attendants may not be able to work if they get sick or if they must take care of a family member who is. You may need to recruit an attendant who only works with you in an emergency. Contact your FMS vendor to get potential attendants enrolled now so they can begin work if needed.
2. **Stock Food and Supplies:** Have one or two weeks of non-perishable food in your home. Find people who can assist with shopping or grocery pickup. Make sure you also have enough household supplies, such as cleaning products, soap, and toilet paper. Keep in mind that there may be shortages of supplies.
3. **Medications:** Identify a way to make sure you can get your medications in a timely manner. This may mean having friends or family assist you or using a pharmacy that offers prescription delivery.
4. **Routinely review and follow the guidance of your local and state health departments.** This is the communication most critical to health. Viruses appear in clusters, so they're best fought on the local level. Follow protocols given for state and local jurisdictions.
5. **Keep working on the basics of infection prevention**, including use of Personal Protective Equipment.
6. **Protect your attendants.** As you work to protect yourself and your attendants, staying in compliance with employment law is important. Consult the [CDC Guidance for Business and Employers](#) and [OSHA guidance](#) for preventing workplace exposure.
  - Review The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's [Americans with Disabilities Act Pandemic Preparedness Guidance](#), and the [OSHA pandemic factsheet](#).

- An outbreak could also trigger policies around the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Family Medical Leave Act. The [Society for Human Resources Management, SHRM](#), has a coronavirus FAQ page that can help.
7. **Explore alternatives to face-to-face triage and physician visits.**
  8. **Review best practices for social distancing.**
    - Prepare for possible changes in activities or appointments.
    - Avoid large crowds and events.
    - Ensure you have adequate food and paper supplies. An option is to have a supply of disposable cups, plates, napkins and utensils that can be thrown away.
    - Practice social distance by keeping about six feet between yourself and anyone coughing or sneezing.
  9. **Follow the guidance** issued by state and local health departments.

#### **Additional References for this document & Resource Links**

- [Recommendations for Long-Term Care Facilities](#) (CDC)
- [Steps Healthcare Facilities Can Take Now to Prepare for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (CDC)
- [Coronavirus Preparation and Response Toolkit](#) (Argentum)
- [Interim Health Care Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (CDC)
- [Handwashing Video](#) (Ecolob)
- [Information Regarding COVID-19](#) AHCA/NCAL (American Health Care Association / National Center for Assisted Living)
- [Handwashing 101](#) (ServSafe)

#### **Attachment(s):**

None

#### **Department Contact:**

Erin Thatcher  
Participant Directed Programs Supervisor  
Office of Community Living

[erin.thatcher@state.co.us](mailto:erin.thatcher@state.co.us)

For specific information, please call the CDPHE Call Center at 303-692-2700.

For general questions about COVID-19: Call CO-Help at 303-389-1687 or 1-877-462-2911 or email [COHELP@RMPDC.org](mailto:COHELP@RMPDC.org), for answers in English and Spanish (Español), Mandarin (普通话), and more.