

St. Clair County Community Mental Health Authority

COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan
Licensed Adult and Family Foster Care Homes

St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMHA) has service contracts with 3 group home corporations that operate 28 licensed adult foster care homes (group homes), as well as service contracts with 6 individually owned family foster care homes within St. Clair County. These licensed foster care homes provide valuable services and supports to a vulnerable population, through a dedicated and trained staff.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the depth of the effect of the virus and what safeguards to implement to avoid contracting the virus were not originally known. Scientists continue to better understand the details of the virus and as a result, guidance continues to evolve. Based on guidance from Governor Whitmer's Executive Orders, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD), a COVID-19 health and safety plan for licensed foster care homes under contract with SCCCMA was developed. This plan is designed to preserve the health safety of the both the residents and staff providing care.

Following Guidance

Licensed foster care homes must follow guidance from state and local officials, including information found at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus), [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), and on the St. Clair County Health Department website COVID-19 page. Information is continually updated so homes must keep updated on changes.

Educate about COVID-19

Licensed foster care homes must educate residents, family members and staff regarding:

- COVID-19 methods of transmission
- COVID-19 symptoms
- CDC guidelines on proper cleaning and disinfecting of the homes
- CDC guidelines on health screening, mask usage, social distancing, and hand washing
- Mandated visitor and staff restrictions due to COVID-19

Staff Requirements

- Staff must undergo daily health screening to include a temperature lower than 100.4°, disclosure of COVID-19 symptoms and/or known COVID-19 exposure.
- Staff must wear face masks and social distance whenever possible
- Staff are not to enter the home if they have a fever of 100.4° or higher or other symptoms of COVID-19 until cleared following CDC guidelines.
- If staff develop a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms while in the home they are to leave immediately until cleared following CDC guidelines.

- Staff are to ensure the residents social distance at all times possible.
- Staff are to follow an enhanced cleaning and sanitizing schedule and process.
- Staff are to provide guidance and reminders to residents about proper handwashing and and/or hand sanitizer as appropriate.

Visitor Restrictions

- Signs are to be posted at all home entrances detailing current visitation policies or restrictions, which are to be based on guidance from state and local officials.
- Alternate methods for visitation and communication with residents are to be encouraged and facilitated (i.e., video conferencing, phone calls, etc.).
- All visitors must wear face masks and social distance whenever possible.
- All visitors must undergo daily health screening to include a temperature lower than 100.4°, disclosure of COVID-19 symptoms and/or known COVID-19 exposure.
- Visitors are not to enter the home if they have a fever of 100.4° or higher or other symptoms of COVID-19.
- If visitors develop a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms while in the home they are to leave immediately until cleared following CDC guidelines.

Early Identification and Response to Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

Screen daily for symptoms of COVID-19, including:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed with a **resident**:

- Immediately isolate the resident in their room and notify the health department. The resident is to be prioritized for testing.
- Inform other residents, guardians and staff of the possible exposure to COVID-19 in the home while maintaining confidentiality as required. CDC guidance should be utilized to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

- Encourage all other residents to self-isolate while waiting assessment to determine if they are also infected or exposed.
- Maintain social distancing between all residents and staff, while still providing necessary services.
- For all situations where close contact cannot be avoided, PPE will be available for staff and residents.
- If a resident is at program and develops a fever or other COVID-19 symptom, they will be brought back to the home. The home will link with the resident's primary care physician for further direction and possible COVID-19 testing.
- A resident with COVID-19 may be able to remain in the foster care home if the resident:
 - Can perform their own activities of daily living.
 - Can isolate in their room for the duration of their illness.
 - Can have meals delivered.
 - Can be regularly checked on by staff (e.g., checking in by phone during each shift; visits by home health staff who wear all recommended PPE).
 - Can request assistance if needed.
- It may also be possible for residents with COVID-19 who require more assistance to remain in the foster care home if they can remain isolated in their room. Staff can provide the level of care needed with access to all recommended PPE and training on proper selection and use.
- If the resident with COVID-19 requires more assistance than can be safely provided by the home, they will be transferred (in consultation with public health) to another location (i.e., MDHHS Designated Regional Hub) equipped to adhere to recommended infection prevention and control practices.
- If the resident with COVID-19 is experiencing urgent medical needs or an emergency, 911 should be contacted for consideration of hospitalization, making sure to inform the emergency personnel of the COVID-19 status.
- Licensed foster care staff are to cooperate with the Public Health Department officials in regard to contact tracing.

If COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed with a **staff**:

- Prioritize the symptomatic staff for COVID-19 testing.
- If testing is available, asymptomatic residents and staff who were exposed to the confirmed COVID-19 positive staff should be considered for testing.
- Residents who were cared for by the staff while the staff was symptomatic should be:
 - Restricted to their room to the greatest extent possible
 - Monitored for fever and respiratory symptoms
 - Required to wear face masks if leaving their room
 - Cared for using recommended PPE until the results of the staff's testing are known

- If COVID-19 is diagnosed in the staff, residents should be cared for using recommended PPE until 14 days after last exposure and prioritized for testing if they develop symptoms.
 - Weekly testing of residents and staff would be required until no additional cases are detected among residents or staff for at least 14 days since the most recent positive case.

References

Guidance to Protect Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities, MDHHS, August 6, 2020

Updated 10/7/2020

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