



support services to help you live your best life

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 20, 2020
TO: Day Habilitation and Community Prevocational Families
FROM: Jeff Paterson, Chief Executive Officer
RE: COVID-19 Updates and Guidance

As you know, the novel Coronavirus is once again sweeping through Western New York, just as the holiday season begins. Each of us has a special responsibility to slow and stop the spread of this deadly virus.

Thanksgiving Gatherings

Under New York State guidelines, no more than 10 people may attend any indoor or outdoor gathering at private homes. This includes Thanksgiving and other holiday celebrations. If a person who participates in Empower day services – including day habilitation and community prevocational services – attends a gathering of more than 10 people, that person should wait until 14 days from the date of the gathering before returning to Empower. This precaution is necessary to keep other program participants and staff safe.

For information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on how to celebrate Thanksgiving safely, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/thanksgiving.html>.

Travel Advisory

Under the state's new travel guidelines, if you travel into New York State from a state other than Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts or Vermont, you are expected to take a COVID-19 test three days before returning to New York. When you arrive in New York, you must quarantine for three days. On the fourth day, you can take another test. If both tests are negative, you no longer have to quarantine. If you are out of New York for less than 24 hours, you do not have to quarantine when you return. For more information, please visit <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory#restricted-states>.

The Future

At this time, we are not in one of the state's yellow zones. We plan to continue providing in-person day habilitation and community prevocational services with all existing safety protocols. However, we could be forced to suspend day services if: (1) we see a spike of infections within our sites, (2) infection rates in our community continue to rise, or (3) the state directs us to stop in-person services. The best way to avoid this situation is for all of us to be as cautious as possible and to follow all public health guidelines.

So, please avoid busy places, avoid groups of more than 10 people, wear masks, stay socially distant, and wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds at a time.

In addition to sending information home to you, we post updates at <https://empower-wny.org/news-events/covid-19-response/>. This fight is not over – but better days will come. Until then, we have to hold strong. We're all in this together. Thank you for the privilege of assisting you and your loved ones.