



July 9, 2021

Dear Family/Guardian of Participant or Person of Empower Day Programs;

After the very long and uncertain year and a half we have received the following great news from OPWDD (Office of People with Developmental Disabilities):

*Providers of OPWDD certified, operated, and/or funded programs should resume all pre- pandemic activities in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations, which still may include any applicable COVID-19 rules, regulations, or guidance issued by OPWDD. Effective June 25, 2021, **providers may operate programs at full capacity to extent possible, to resume** unrestricted visitation at **and community outings** from residential facilities, and to remove capacity limitations during transportation if all individuals are vaccinated.*

*Ongoing COVID-19 Precautions:*

*Consistent with CDC guidance, **fully vaccinated people are no longer required to wear masks or maintain social distance in most places within NYS, including within OPWDD certified, operated and/or funded facilities and programs. However, individuals and staff will be required to wear masks, to the extent they can medically tolerate one, regardless of vaccination status, while being transported between OPWDD certified locations or transported as part of an OPWDD certified service (e.g. from a residence to a day program).***

*Per CDC guidance, **individuals and staff who are unvaccinated are expected to continue to wear masks, if they can medically tolerate one, and maintain social distance to the extent possible at certified locations** and/or when delivering or receiving certified services. Unvaccinated visitors to such locations must continue to wear masks and maintain social distance to the extent possible for the duration of the visit.*

*All high touch surfaces should continue to be cleaned and disinfected consistent with CDC guidelines.*



Based on this new guidance Empower's day programs can return back to regular capacity!!! With this great news please note the following details regarding this:

1. Vaccinated people/staff **do not** have to wear a mask while in the Empower program buildings.
2. Vaccinated and unvaccinated people/staff **must continue to wear a mask while being transported on our vehicles.**
3. Unvaccinated people/staff **must continue wearing a mask and following the social distance regulations** while in the Empower program buildings.
4. Unvaccinated people/staff **must follow social distance guidelines while on Empower vehicles.**
5. Empower will continue to take temperatures upon entering the program buildings and ask the COVID questions until further notice.
6. Day programs can begin to have community outings again; however the new guidance will be followed as listed above.

Moving forward and not looking back (for obvious reasons), please be patient as we need to make arrangements for the buildings and transportation to resume back to full capacity. There may be some changes to drivers and pick up/drop off times to adjust. We will do our best to make it as easy and smooth transition back to normalcy as possible. If a person that is unvaccinated would like to become vaccinated please use the following link for an appointment: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov>

Thank you for your understanding during the pandemic and we look forward to getting back to what we've missed so much. If you have any questions please call Kim Kiely at 716-260-1791 ext 207.

Kim Kiely

Director Job Training & Day Programs