

## **HMEA'S RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):**

(Updated Thursday, March 19, 2020)

### **Status Update**

HMEA has procedures and reporting mechanisms in place to monitor all potential risks to COVID-19 exposure and infection among the people we serve and our employees.

**Currently there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 coronavirus at HMEA.**

We do have one staff person who is exhibiting symptoms after being in close contact with a relative who recently returned from Italy. This individual is presently quarantined and will remain out of work for 14 days. They have been in contact with their doctor who has advised that they follow-up in two days if symptoms persist, at which point a Coronavirus test would be performed.

As we become aware of Probable Exposures, Probable Infections and Confirmed Positive test results we will provide updated information here.

### **General Procedures/Precautions**

- Staffing
  - We are instituting remote work and lean staff teams where onsite staffing is essential.
  - HMEA's Emergency Steering Committee is monitoring COVID-19 developments daily.
- Visitation Protocols: Visitations limited to essential individuals only
  - Visitation limited to our daily home-based staff for each site and the Individuals we serve.
  - We are NOT accepting visitors (including family members) to any HMEA sites-unless they have essential business and they will not be allowed entry until they are screened and thermo scanned.
  - Our Consultants and Independent Contractors will be asked to refrain from coming to the Programs over the next few weeks – at which time we will reassess our protocol based upon information gathered from the monitoring daily developments from the Center of Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Public Health (DPH) and state funders in both states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island.
- Daily Screening
  - HMEA will conduct daily screening of all who arrive at Day Programs (HMEA Staff; Clients; Families; Guardians; DDS/MassHealth personnel) for respiratory or other symptoms potentially indicating COVID-19 by taking their temperature and a short questionnaire for recent travel to an affected geographic area or high-risk setting - and we will document the screenings for all visitors prior to gaining entrance to the Program.
- Cleaning/Sanitizing
  - Since the end of February, our Teams have ensured there is signage for Proper Handwashing techniques in our Bathroom and Kitchenette areas and a Station at the entry of the Programs for guests to sanitize their hands upon entry.

- Our staff have increased their cleaning/disinfecting routines of all tabletops; kitchen/bathroom areas; offices; door handles; electronic equipment (I-pads; Kindles; Gaming systems, etc).
- Sanitizing washers/dryers and the interior of our vehicles (frequently touched seats and steering wheel, etc).
- Supplies
  - The programs have inventoried their water; paper goods (toilet paper; tissues; paper towels) and cleaning supplies and are well stocked.

## Programs and Services - Status and Schedules

HMEA PROGRAM STATUS UPDATE			
PROGRAM	LOCATION(S)	OPEN/CLOSED	STATUS/PROCEDURES
Children’s Home-based and Consultative Services (including DESE/DDS)	15 South Street, Hudson, MA	Closed effective March 21	All community activities have been cancelled for the duration of this week.  Any families interested in receiving ABA services through Telehealth please contact us.
The Darnell School	15 South Street, Hudson, MA	Closed	We are following the closures in place for all schools in the state. Activity packets were compiled and sent to students.
Day Services Programs	ALL	Closed	We will be addressing individuals' needs for activities and are closely monitoring their physical and mental health as well as staff’s during this challenging time.
HMEA ABA	171 Plantation St., Worcester, MA	Closed effective March 18	Any families interested in receiving ABA services through Telehealth please contact us contact us at 508-298-1636 or <a href="mailto:ABAServices@hmea.org">ABAServices@hmea.org</a> .
HMEA’s Autism Resource Central	171 Plantation Street	Open for remote visits and telephone screenings only	All social activities are canceled until further notice.

Residential facilities	ALL	Open	Residents sheltering in place. Essential staff/visitors only.
TechACCESS			Staff remain available to help. We are monitoring email and voicemail. Email addresses can be found on our website on our <a href="#">team page</a> or that general questions can be sent to techaccess@techaccess-ri.org.

### **All Day Services Programs Closed**

- HMEA has made the difficult decision to close all day service programs effective 3/16/20
- We will be addressing individuals' needs for activities and are closely monitoring their physical and mental health as well as staff's during this challenging time.
- We are in the process of contacting individuals, families, and sister organizations regarding our closings.

### **Residential Facilities**

- We are keeping all individuals who reside in HMEA residences in their homes.
- No non-essential visitation.
- No family visitation.

### **Children's Services**

- HMEA ABA is closed effective March 18 until further notice.
  - Any families interested in receiving ABA services through Telehealth please contact us at 508-298-1636 or [ABAServices@hmea.org](mailto:ABAServices@hmea.org).
- Children's Home-based and Consultative Services (including DESE/DDS) are closed effective March 21 until further notice.
  - All community activities have been cancelled for the duration of this week.
  - Any families interested in receiving ABA services through Telehealth please contact us.
- The Darnell School is closed until further notice.

### **HMEA's Autism Resource Central (171 Plantation Street)**

- All social activities are canceled until further notice
  - Remote visits and telephone screenings continue. For more information, call 508-835-4278.

### **TechACCESS**

- Staff remain available to help. We are monitoring email and voicemail. Email addresses can be found on our website on our [team page](#) or that general questions can be sent to techaccess@techaccess-ri.org.

### **Social Activities and Events**

- Family Information Night meetings are cancelled and will resume in the Fall.
- The Spring Spectacular scheduled for the end of April is postponed. A new date is TBD.
- Any other event updates will be shared on our website and Family Email Groups or Flyers

### **Community Activity & Volunteer Schedules**

- Large Gatherings and High-Touch Areas will be avoided, and Social Distancing and Increased Hygiene Practices will be promoted.

### **Additional Resources for Information and updates on COVID-19**

- The following websites are great resources for updated information on COVID-19:
  - [mass.gov/2019coronavirus](https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus)
  - [mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-and-masshealth](https://www.mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-and-masshealth)
  - [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov)
  - [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int)
- Massachusetts Updates
  - In coordination with agencies across the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, MassHealth/EOHHS have released provider bulletins and additional guidance in response to 2019 novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).
  - These policies expand telehealth coverage, including telephonic coverage, expand coverage through Hospital-Determined Presumptive Eligibility (HPE), provide information for providers to bill for COVID-19 lab testing, cover 90-day refills of prescriptions and early refills, and remind providers that there are no copays for lab tests and pharmacists cannot deny medications if a member cannot pay.
  - The bulletins and guidance are based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of COVID-19 and will be updated as needed and as additional information is available. The following bulletins and guidance have been posted:
    - [All Provider Bulletin 289: MassHealth Coverage and Reimbursement Policy for Services Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
    - [Managed Care Entity Bulletin 21: Coverage and Reimbursement for Services Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
    - [All Provider Bulletin 288: Coverage Provided via Hospital-Determined Presumptive Eligibility](#)
    - [Pharmacy Facts 141: Updates Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Effective March 14, 2020](#)
    - [Community Day Program Settings \(e.g. Adult Day Health, Day Habilitation, Councils on Aging, etc.\) 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance](#)
    - [Non-Agency Based In-Home Caregivers \(e.g. PCAs, Independent Nurses, etc.\) 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance](#)
    - [Agency-Based In-Home Caregivers & Workers \(e.g. Home Health Agencies, Personal Care Management Agencies, Home Care Agencies, Adult Foster Care, etc.\) 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance](#)
  - Health Insurance carrier updates

- Please be advised that all Massachusetts health insurance carriers have begun addressing coverage for Coronavirus and responding to the state mandate for coverage for FULLY INSURED plans.
- Some are posting notices on their website or posting to the employer portal – some are also releasing email blasts. Employees can also get information on the carrier websites as well.
- Please see the information regarding removing cost-sharing for certain related services – at this time this does NOT apply to any qualified high deductible health plans (HSA eligible plans) or Self-Insured plans.
  - [Allways](#)
  - [Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA \(BCBSMA\)](#)
  - [Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI \(BCBSRI\)](#)
  - [Harvard Pilgrim Health Care \(HPHC\)](#) (*\*scroll down to bottom of page on left with Coronavirus information including a FAQ for members to reference*)
  - [Tufts Health Plan](#)
  - [United Health Care](#)