



# Community, Work & Independence, Inc.

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March 27, 2020

Dear Parents, Family Members, Guardians, Medical Professionals, Advocates and Staff Members:

As we continue through these uncharted waters with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the impact every day we want to reach out to let you know what we are doing at CWI. I want to emphasize our utmost concern is the health, wellness and safety of our individuals and staff members. As such, our Senior Administrative Team has been meeting daily to review and implement guidance from The Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), as well as all new guidelines set forth by New York State and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It is important to note that CWI, Inc. does **not** have a confirmed case of COVID-19 at this time.

On March 17, 2020, we received the directive from OPWDD to suspend all day services for individuals for a minimum of 2 weeks. Most recently, in an effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19, OPWDD is requiring a temporary suspension of visitation to our residential programs – effective immediately. (CWI staff aren't visitors). This includes our homes and supported apartments. Due to the new and ever changing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, below is a list of all measures CWI has taken, and continues to enforce, in an effort to keep everyone in programs safe while abiding by OPWDD and CDC guidelines, as well as our SEIU-200 Union Employee Contract:

- Administrative Staff are on a rotating schedule to work from home and/or adjusting their schedules when able to limit the amount of staff in the building at a given time.
- Visitors are no longer allowed to enter Administrative offices without prior approval. All employee paperwork can be dropped off at the designated drop-box outside, out in back of 16 Pearl Street in Glens Falls.
- Every visitor, when approved, will be screened for symptoms (cough, shortness of breath and fever) or potential exposure to someone with COVID-19.
- We posted signage notifying every one of the suspensions of visitation policy.
- We fully recognize the emotional impact these restrictions are causing during this crisis; however, it is a necessary precaution as we work to minimize transmission of COVID-19 in our community and risk to our staff and the people we support. To continue balancing the social-emotional needs of our individuals, we ask for you to please contact the Residential Manager to coordinate your communication options with your loved one.
- We are keeping a sign-in sheet at all sites for visitors, when applicable.
- At the request of OPWDD, we submitted a plan for the suspension of services, the number of individuals impacted and the plan for individuals living with family members.
- We are evaluating how our Clinicians (OT, PT, Speech and Behavioral) will be providing services in the homes.
- We are providing some counseling and psychiatric services via telehealth.
- We are providing telephonic check-ins with individuals to ensure their essential needs are being addressed and in some cases assisting with meeting these essential needs.
- We have signage at all of our sites and houses to identify health safety requirements for CWI Staff.
- We are reminding everyone to wash their hands and follow all of the directives provided by the Department of Health and Center for Disease Control.

- Continued -

- Sanitizing common areas daily including disinfecting door handles/knobs, telephones, pens at the sign-in logs, tables, kitchen areas, agency tablets, and vehicles.
- If the agency becomes aware that an individual or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will immediately notify all appropriate stakeholders including parents, family members and guardians. If an individual or staff member shows respiratory symptoms, we will follow our current practices for handling respiratory illnesses, subject to any additional guidance forthcoming.
- The agency is following guidance from OPWDD stating that all community outings and home visits are suspended.
- We have inventoried our protective equipment and medical supplies and are placing orders and doing innovation sourcing.
- There is a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We continue to check throughout the day for additional supplies.
- CWI will be following other health care provider's guidance (DOH, nursing homes, hospitals etc.) of the use of the PPE based on a person's medical vulnerability.
- We are providing Telephonic check-ins across all service areas.

The agency has infectious disease protocols in place and has been taking steps including cleaning and disinfecting throughout our programs to minimize the spread of viruses and a variety of other illnesses. There are a number of steps that individuals, staff and community members can take to minimize the spread of all respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, according to the state Department of Health:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Heavily soiled hands need to be thoroughly washed.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover our cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash can.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Below are some links you may find useful in regards to the COVID-10 virus:

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>
- COVID-19: What is Stigma and What Causes It? [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fstigma-faq.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fstigma-faq.html)
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) – Frequently Asked Questions – Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#prevention>
- Prevention, Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

Please know we will do everything in our control to prevent the spread of this virus. Thank you for your understanding and support, and we look forward to resuming all services.

Regards,

*Mark*

Mark Donahue  
President/Chief Executive Officer  
Community, Work & Independence, Inc.