



Massachusetts Day Program
2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance
Updated October 13, 2022

Day Programs

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The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) continues to work with state, federal, and local partners on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and we continue to appreciate the essential role day programs have in responding to this evolving situation. On May 29, 2021, the Commonwealth lifted COVID-19 restrictions while maintaining necessary COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures in certain settings, including day programs. This guidance replaces and supersedes all previously issued Day Program guidance issued by EOHHS.

Please note this guidance is intended to supplement, not supplant, provisions from regulatory agencies that oversee programs and facilities included in this guidance. **Guidance may be subject to change as required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.**

COVID-19 Public Health and Safety Standards

This guidance shall be used for the day program types listed below:

- Adult Day Health
- Brain Injury Centers
- Brain Injury Clubhouses
- Community Based Day Support
- Day Habilitation
- DMH Clubhouse Services
- Independent Living Centers
- Individual Supported Employment
- Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP)
- Group Supported Employment
- HCBS Waiver Day Services
- Psychiatric Day Treatment Programs
- Psychiatric Partial Hospital Programs
- Recovery Support Centers
- Structured Outpatient Addiction Programs (SOAP)

Day program providers must continue to comply with federal and state COVID-19 guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, guidance on: [a\) personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#), [b\) considerations for health care personnel after vaccination](#), and [c\) return to work guidance for all workers](#), and [d\) safety standards for workplaces](#).

In addition to these requirements, it is recommended that programs check the CDC website frequently to ensure they are implementing the most current CDC guidance and [Massachusetts guidance](#). These standards are informed by public health data related to COVID-19 and may be amended in response to

such data. Providers must also adhere to program-specific guidance that may be issued by EOHHS agencies.

Protective Measures / Mitigating the Risk of Spreading COVID-19

Masks

- Masks are optional for staff and participants of day programs, regardless of vaccination status with the exception of Adult Day Health Programs.
- In Adult Day Health **only**, masking is optional for participants, but staff are required to wear masks on site, except in areas where participants do not have access such as the kitchen or office.
- Consistent with [DPH Guidance](#), it is recommended that individuals with weakened immune systems or an underlying medical condition wear a mask or face covering when indoors.

Congregate Activities

- Participants, **regardless of vaccination status**, may participate in congregate activities in the setting so long as they are not currently isolated due to infection.

Screening entrants

- Settings should screen all individuals arriving at the program for symptoms and may utilize posted signage as a means to do so. Programs should have all individuals entering the facility (including participants, healthcare personnel and visitors) self-assess for symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, headache, myalgia, chills, fatigue, gastrointestinal symptoms, new onset loss of smell or taste and a fever). Programs should post signage at facility entrance(s) explaining self-screening to visitors and staff. If an individual self-screens positively for symptoms or a diagnosis of SARS-CoV2 infection in the past 10 days, then they should not be allowed to enter the facility. Any individual who had a diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the prior 10 days must meet the isolation criteria outlined here to return: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-exposure-guidance-for-the-general-public><https://www.mass.gov/guidance/covid-19-isolation-and-quarantine-guidance-for-health-care-personnel>

Staff protocols

- If staff experience signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 infection while they are working, they should notify the program supervisor and put on a mask, if they are not wearing one already. They should also be tested promptly and advised to leave the setting.

To determine when an employee may safely return to the setting following symptoms of COVID-19 infection or close contact, follow the DPH [Isolation and Quarantine for HCP Guidance](#).

Additional Considerations

- Congregate care providers should continue to encourage social distancing through administrative and environmental controls, such as the use of floor markings and signage to promote social distancing and proper hand hygiene. Participants who choose to wear masks do not need to social distance.
- Day programs should demonstrate adherence to [relevant guidelines from DPH and CDC](#) regarding infection control and prevention to maintain a safe environment for participants and staff.
- If signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 infection develop while a participant is on-site, the individual should put on a mask, if they are not wearing one already and move to an isolated area of the program. Notify the program director immediately.

Precautionary Steps to Keep Participants and Staff Healthy

Reminders for Participants and Staff

- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol often. If alcohol-based hand rub is not available, then wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Wash hands before eating, after going to the bathroom (or changing diapers), coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover coughs or sneezes using a tissue or the inside of your elbow (not your hands). Immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you feel sick.

Facility Protective Measures

- Masks should be made available to any staff in day programs who choose to wear them with the exception of adult day health programs where masks, such as surgical masks, should be provided and worn by all staff in this setting. Day programs should maintain sufficient PPE volume on-hand to align with use as directed in the DPH comprehensive PPE guidance. Staff should not use cloth face coverings, which are not considered PPE. Further information on PPE is included [here](#).
- Decisions about when to scale back or cancel activities should be made in consultation with your local public health official(s), or the DPH Epidemiology Line at 617-983-6800, if needed, and informed by a review of the COVID-19 situation in your community.
- Train and educate program personnel about preventing the transmission of respiratory pathogens such as COVID-19.
- Meet all [health and safety requirements and service standards established by EOHHS Human Service Transportation](#) (HST) for any program-based transportation not provided through the EOHHS HST brokerage system.

Cases of COVID-19 in Employees or Participants

Suspected Cases of COVID-19

Any day program serving a participant with suspected COVID-19 should immediately contact a healthcare provider associated with the program and the local board of health to review the risk assessment and discuss laboratory testing and control measures.

These control measures include the following:

- Provide a mask, such as a surgical mask, for the participant exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, if they are not already wearing one.
- Isolate the participant in a private room with the door closed, when possible.
 - In the event of concerns relative to self-harm, programs will refer to agency suicide prevention measures and internal safety protocols.
 - Make considerations for effective communication access.
 - If the setting has two bathrooms, designate one bathroom for use by the individual with suspected COVID-19 and the other bathroom for others to use.
- If you are in the same room as the individual, wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, and keep as much distance as possible.
- Ask the individual about [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- If possible, and if the program has clinical staff then they should immediately assess the individual using appropriate PPE, including N95 respirator, eye protection, gown and gloves, or staff should arrange a phone or video call with the individual's health care provider.
- If the individual requires immediate medical care, call 911 for an ambulance and inform EMS of the individual's symptoms and concern for COVID-19.

Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Any day program with a staff member or serving a participant who is identified as a confirmed case of COVID-19 and should contact:

- The local board of health or the DPH Epidemiology Line at 617-983-6800 with any questions about risk assessment or laboratory testing and control measures.

Close Contact with a Confirmed Case of COVID-19

A staff person or participant may have had close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 but has not tested positive themselves.

Asymptomatic Health Care Professionals (HCPs), including those program direct care workers which have been designated as HCPs, may continue working, with PPE, after they have been exposed to a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in accordance with the [DPH Isolation and Quarantine for HCP Guidance](#).

“Close contact” definitions can be found in the [CDC Guidance](#). Decisions about who had close contact and implementation of quarantine are done through the local board of health.

- Staff members or participants are not required to [quarantine](#) following close contact, but should be tested according to DPH Exposure Guidance for the Public: [COVID-19 Isolation and Exposure Guidance for the General Public | Mass.gov](#)
- The facility does not need to be closed.
- The facility does not need to be cleaned at this time.

Providing Care to Participants

Those with presumed or confirmed COVID-19 need isolate prior to returning to the program. Those with close contact with cases of COVID-19 but without symptoms do not need to quarantine prior to returning to the program but should wear a mask through day 10 and test according to DPH Exposure Guidance for the Public: [COVID-19 Isolation and Exposure Guidance for the General Public | Mass.gov](#). Consult the local board of health to review the risk assessment and assess whether further actions need to be taken at the program.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE Use

Day programs [must continue to follow the most recent guidelines issued by DPH](#) that align with the CDC as it relates to PPE usage, including any updated guidelines released subsequent to the date of this guidance. In addition, day programs should:

- Ensure that they have adequate supply of PPE and other essential supplies for the expected number of participants. To meet this requirement, providers may not rely on additional distribution of PPE from government emergency stockpiles.
- Develop and implement appropriate PPE use policies for all services and settings in accordance with DPH and CDC guidelines. Day programs should maintain sufficient PPE volume on-hand to align with use as directed in the DPH comprehensive PPE guidance.
- Ensure all staff have appropriate PPE and are trained in proper use, consistent with DPH guidance, to perform the service or procedure and any related care for the participant.

With the PPE that is appropriate for and available to providers, providers should follow the [CDC’s guidance for optimizing the supply of PPE](#). Programs should continue to educate personnel on [proper use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) and when to use different types of PPE.

Cleaning

Day programs should have an established plan for thorough cleaning and disinfection of all areas as consistent with [CDC guidance](#).

A [cleaning and disinfection of a facility](#) may be required if a staff member or participant is confirmed to have COVID-19 and was present in the facility while they were symptomatic.

Monitoring staff emotional health

Emotional reactions to stressful situations such as new viruses are expected. Remind staff that feeling sad, anxious, overwhelmed, having trouble sleeping, or other symptoms of distress are normal.

If symptoms become worse, last longer than a month, or if they struggle to participate in their usual daily activities, have them reach out for support and help.

Emotional health resources

The national Disaster Distress Helpline is available with 24/7 emotional support and crisis counseling for anyone experiencing distress or other mental health concerns. Calls (1-800-985-5990) and texts (text TalkWithUs to 66746) are answered by trained counselors who will listen to your concerns, explore coping and other available supports, and offer referrals to community resources for follow-up care and support.

Additional resources can be found [here](#).