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Subject: CRF Update-COVID-19
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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DATE: April 21, 2020

TO: Children's Residential Facilities (CRF)

FROM: Tara Ragland, Director, Division of Licensing Programs

SUBJECT: CRF update- Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

It is critically important that Children's Residential Facilities (CRF) remain informed of updated COVID-19 information and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) and Virginia Department of Health ([VDH](#)). Virginia Department of Social Services COVID-19 information is found at this link:

<https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/corona.cgi>.

VDH released [interim guidance for group/congregate residential program settings](#) on April 3, 2020. VDH provides steps to take now before a COVID-19 case is identified in your facility to protect staff and residents. Additionally, there is guidance on steps to take when a COVID-19 case is identified at the facility. Another guidance resource on COVID-19 is from the National Council for Behavioral Health, [COVID-19 Guidance for Behavioral Health Residential Facilities](#).

Providers must implement everyday preventative actions and provide instructions to staff and residents about actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 or any infectious disease. Written policies and procedures that include use of standard precautions and address communicable medical conditions should be updated to address COVID-19 guidance from the CDC and VDH and implemented immediately.

The best preventative measures to protect yourself and others include:

- Washing your hands often,
- Monitoring residents and staff for COVID-19 like symptoms,

- Practicing social distancing. Social distancing is putting at least six feet distance between yourself and other people and avoiding groups of more than 10 people, and
- Increase cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, especially those frequently touched.

Every person residing or arriving at the facility should be screened daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 infection. Ask staff if they have had close contact (e.g. in their household or place of employment) with someone with any COVID-19 symptoms and do not allow that person into the facility if ill, has an ill person at home, or has been in close contact with anyone with COVID-19. Visitors and the use of volunteers should be restricted to reduce the threat of bringing the virus into the facility.

It is recommended that providers develop flexible attendance and sick leave policies for staff who may need to stay home due to being sick or caring for a sick household member. It is also recommended that providers identify critical job functions and positions. Plan for alternative coverage, and cross-train staff members if necessary. Providers may want to identify contingency plans in preparation for any potential health emergency involving widespread infectious disease.

It is important to note that providers should be aware of staff and resident's anxiety and stress during this time. Providers should allow time for staff and residents to communicate and discuss their anxiety and stress. It is recommended to review the CDC resource for [How to Prepare: Manage Anxiety and Stress](#) and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#).

If you have further questions, please contact your licensing inspector.