

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and Policy for PCA Choice Services

Current active plan as of: June 30th, 2020

Ability Care Partners is committed to supporting a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees and clients. Ability Care Partners has compiled the following information to aid clients and caregivers in implementing best practices for client's inhome care to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19. If at any time a caregiver or client feels unsafe, they should share their concerns with Ability Care Partners. This information is available on our website (*a physical copy is available upon request*) at <http://abilitycare.com/coronavirus/>

Our **COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and Policy** will be evaluated quarterly, and, if necessary, updated and reposted to our website.

Our **COVID-19 Preparedness Plan** follows **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)** guidelines, federal **OSHA standards** related to **COVID-19** and **Executive Order 20-48**, and addresses:

- Hygiene and source controls
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Arrivals and departures
- Screening and policies for staff exhibiting sign and symptoms of COVID-19
- Screening and policies for service recipients exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19
- Social distancing throughout the day
- Food preparation and meals
- Ventilation
- Communications and training

## Hygiene

All employees are expected to regularly wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Information on proper hand cleaning is available on our website. Employees should also encourage their clients to wash their hands when possible.

Employees should wash their hands:

- Immediately at the start of their shift
  - After using the bathroom
  - Before, during and after preparing food
  - Before and after providing care to their client
  - After blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing
  - After touching an animal or animal waste
  - After touching high-contact areas, such as door handles, remotes, computer keyboards, cell phones, etc.
- If soap and water is not available, employees and clients may use a hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol based.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Employees should wear masks and gloves when providing care for their client. As a Consumer Directed PCA Choice agency, we do not provide supplies such as masks or gloves to clients for their caregivers. It is considered a client responsibility under our service structure. If a client does not have the resources to supply gloves and surgical masks (or homemade cloth masks), please contact us to request special assistance in obtaining PPE.

## Cleaning & Disinfecting

- Ability Care Partners recommends that clients, employees and responsible parties follow **MDH** and **CDC** guidance for frequent cleaning and disinfecting of your workspace, especially shared spaces.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Ensure high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, stair rails, counters, tables and chairs, phones, keyboards, program equipment and other shared items are regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Minimize the use of shared supplies (e.g. arts and crafts, office supplies) that cannot be sanitized and consider using designated bins for clean and used items.
- Ability Care Partners recommends using EPA-registered disinfectants recommended by the **CDC**:  
<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

## Arrivals & Departures

Clients and/or Responsible Parties should use the Lack of Exposure Certificate provided by Ability Care Partners as a screening tool for employees at the start of each shift. The **CDC** also worked with Apple to provide an app for a cell phone that can also be used as a screening tool. It is available at: [www.apple.com/covid19](http://www.apple.com/covid19).

If an employee is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, they will need to inform the client/responsible party prior to the start of their shift. Ability Care Partners recommends that the employee not work, and that the client/Responsible Party refer to their emergency staffing plan if other staff are not available.

After conducting a COVID-19 screen, employees should wash their hands and put on a mask and gloves before they start providing any cares. Guidelines for appropriate mask use are available at: [www.abilitycare.com/coronavirus](http://www.abilitycare.com/coronavirus).

## Screening and Policies for employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19

If an employee is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or has come into contact with someone who has tested positive, they are required to contact Ability Care Partners right away to report their (potential) exposure or test results. Ability Care Partners will check in with the employee and client, and provide current **MDH** and **CDC** recommendations. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, Ability Care Partners will contact the person infected and will conduct a risk assessment and report their answers to MDH. Ability Care Partners will continue to be in contact with the employee, client and **MDH** until the employee is able to return to work per **CDC** guidelines.

## Screening and policies for clients exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19

If a client is showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or has come into contact with someone with COVID-19, they should contact Ability Care Partners to report their (potential) exposure. Ability Care Partners will conduct a risk assessment screening and will develop a team to check in with the client. Ability Care Partners will report the information to MDH and will follow MDH's instructions. The client/Responsible Party should notify their employees right away, and utilize their staffing back up plan while they are at risk of transmission of COVID-19

## Social Distancing (Physical Distancing)

Social distancing, aka. "physical distancing," means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice social or physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people. We request that all client service coordinators work from home. Hold any required meetings remotely, if possible. If it is not possible to maintain a distance (such as during transportation situations), have a plan on how to mitigate the spread of the virus in close quarters such as a vehicle. Staff may wish to use disinfectant spray on seats, disinfectant wipes on dashboard, door handles and other interior places both before and after transportation occurs. For direct care services that require close contact, be sure to use masks and gloves, with handwashing or use of hand sanitizer before and after care.

## Accessing the Community & Transportation

When assisting the client to access their community or when providing transportation, Ability Care Partners recommends the following precautions:

- Plan for the use of facemasks when accessing the community or providing transportation.
- Take precautions when using public or private transportation when accessing the community.
- Limit the number of people in the vehicle.
- Remind clients to wear a facemask, wash their hands, and follow social distancing guidelines while they are in the community.

## Food Preparation & Meals

When assigned on the Care Plan, PCAs should prepare meals for clients using good hygiene practices and serve the client in the same manner. If possible, apply social distancing guidelines to reduce the number of people at the table when food is served, if anyone who may be visiting who is not a member of the existing household. All services are provided in a client's home setting.

## Ventilation

- Work to maximize the amount of fresh air being brought in, if air recirculation is limited.
- Take steps to minimize air flow blowing across people.



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## Visitors

Ability Care Partners recommends the following safety precautions for visitors in the home:

- Visitors should be screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entering the home.
- Provide visitors with hand sanitizer or access to a handwashing area (and facemasks if available).
- Practice social distancing between client and their visitors.
- Whenever possible, visits should occur outdoors.
- Clean and disinfect after each visit.
- Encourage clients to wash their hands after interacting with a visitor.

## Communications & Training

Ability Care Partners provides updates to employees and clients/Responsible parties as new information about COVID-19 becomes available. Communication is posted on our website and via email (regular mail upon request).

Ability Care Partners has provided **Coronavirus Training** through **Care Academy** that was developed for Direct Care Workers. Paper copies of the training can be mailed to employees upon request.

To access the training, employees can go to: [https://info.careacademy.com/en-us/covid19-certification-class#Understand\\_COVID-19](https://info.careacademy.com/en-us/covid19-certification-class#Understand_COVID-19)