

**Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Developmental Center Screening of Staff¹
New Jersey Department of Human Services
Division of Developmental Disabilities**

March 12, 2020

The protocols that the State is implementing in this policy are designed to reduce the possibility of exposure to illness for both employees and the people under our care. These protocols are based on best practices now being recommended by various U.S. public health authorities and are not being implemented for any punitive purpose.

This policy is subject to change at any time based on guidance from federal, state or local public health authorities.

Policies on use of leave time

The Civil Service Commission has released policies on the use of leave balances for various situations involving COVID-19, such as an employee exposure and immediate family member exposure. These can be reviewed at the following link: <https://www.state.nj.us/csc/employees/covid.html>.

If an employee follows these screening protocols, and as a result is not permitted to work because of a potential exposure to COVID-19, as revealed by these screening protocols, they will be paid and will not be required to use accumulated leave time. The leave time that they use will not be counted toward any assessment of excessive absenteeism.

- Per Civil Service Commission policy, employees must provide documentation verifying the exposure within three work days of the initial absence.
- As with any documentation of an illness, the documentation should be provided to the developmental center's office that receives sick leave documentation. If an employee does not provide such documentation, then the employee will be required to utilize their own accumulated leave time.

If an employee follows these screening protocols, and as a result is not permitted to work because of a respiratory illness that is NOT COVID-19, they will be required to use accumulated leave time, starting on the day after they are sent home. The leave time that they use will not be counted toward any assessment of excessive absenteeism.

¹ This policy is based on the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services' "Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-2019) in nursing homes" (Ref: QSO-20-14-NH), available at: <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfo/policy-and/qso-20-14-nh.pdf>, and the Massachusetts General Hospital Center of Disaster Medicine's SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Toolkit, available at: [https://www.massgeneral.org/assets/MGH/pdf/disaster-medicine/SARS-CoV-2%20\(COVID-19\)%20Toolkit%20Version%203.pdf](https://www.massgeneral.org/assets/MGH/pdf/disaster-medicine/SARS-CoV-2%20(COVID-19)%20Toolkit%20Version%203.pdf)

Applicability

Staff planning to travel internationally

Staff planning travel to any area that is not a U.S. state or territory shall notify supervisors of the areas and countries they will be traveling to at least one week before the departure date. Supervisors are required to report up the appropriate chain-of-command to the CEO who will provide this information to the COVID-19 Committee.

Staff during shift

Staff that show signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection at work will be immediately separated from resident areas and referred to a nurse for a face-to-face symptom and temperature check. The nurse shall administer the same screening process as the one outline in the section for “Staff before each shift.”

Staff returning from international travel to an area subject to a Level 3 CDC Travel Health Notice

All staff that have traveled internationally to an area with a Level 3 CDC Travel Health Notice will not be permitted to report to the developmental center for a shift until the expiration of a 14-day period of recommended self-isolation, starting from the date they returned to the continental United States.

If an employee is not permitted to work because of travel to such an area, they will be paid and will not be required to use accumulated leave time. The leave time that they use will not be counted toward any assessment of excessive absenteeism.

- Employees must provide documentation verifying the travel within three work days of the initial absence.
- As with any documentation of an illness, the documentation should be provided to the developmental center’s office that receives sick leave documentation. If an employee does not provide such documentation, then the employee will be required to utilize their own accumulated leave time.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued Travel Health Notices for the following international areas, all of which are subject to the 14-day period requirement:

- China
- Iran
- South Korea
- Most of Europe (see appendix for list)

CDC Travel Notices: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

This list is subject to change. Due to regional designations, the complete list is contained in the Appendix to this policy. Moreover, the process for changing this State policy for areas added or removed by the CDC will be different.

The process for adding or removing areas to this policy is as follows:

- If the CDC adds an international area to its Travel Notices, staff returning from that area will be subject to the 14-day self-isolation period before returning to work, regardless of whether this policy has been updated to include the area in the bulleted list.
- If the CDC removes an international area from its Travel Notices, staff returning from that area will still be subject to the 14-day period until this policy is updated to remove it.

Staff before each shift

All staff are required to complete a screening before starting work.

The unit supervisor will ask each employee three brief questions related to respiratory illness risks, signs and symptoms. Staff answering “NO” to all questions will begin work. Staff that do not clear the screening may be referred to a nurse for a face-to-face symptom and temperature check before being permitted to work. If an employee is not permitted to work, the supervisor or nurse that conducted the screen will notify the CEO or designee.

The screening questions and response are:

1. Please answer “Yes” or “No” to each of the following questions:
 - a. Have you had a temperature over 99.9° within the past 24 hours?
 - b. Have you had a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>

If YES to both questions, the employee will not be permitted to work. The employee will be required to utilize accumulated sick leave balances per the Civil Service Commission policy noted above, starting on the day after they are sent home. **If an employee is later diagnosed with COVID-19, the Civil Service Commission policies on leave will apply.**

If YES to only question (b), the employee will be given a mask and directed to report to the screening room. The shift nurse at the screening room will take the employee’s temperature.

- If the temperature is OVER 99.9°, the employee will not be permitted to work. The employee will be required to utilize accumulated sick leave balances per the Civil Service Commission policy noted above, starting on the day after they are sent home. **If an employee is later diagnosed with COVID-19, the Civil Service Commission policies on leave will apply.**
- If the temperature is UNDER 99.9°, the employee will begin work.

If an employee is later diagnosed with COVID-19, the Civil Service Commission policies on leave will apply.

2. Have you or someone you live with had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

If YES, the employee will not be permitted to begin work and will need to answer additional questions by the shift nurse designated by the COVID-19 Committee.

The employee will be given a mask and directed to report to the screening room. The shift nurse at the screening room will collect information on the nature of the contact and any information the employee has received from a medical professional or public health authority. If the nurse determines that the individual did not have close contact, the employee will report to work.

- **Close contact for healthcare exposures is defined as follows:**

- a) Being within approximately 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time.

- Examples

- Caring for or visiting the person.

- Sitting within 6 feet of the person in a healthcare waiting area.

- b) Having unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions or excretions of the patient.

- Examples

- Being coughed on.

- Touching used tissues with a bare hand.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assessment-hcp.html>

Employees answering YES who have had direct contact or have been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus will not be permitted to report to the developmental center until they are medically cleared by a physician or public health authority.

The details about employees answering YES who have had direct contact should be immediately reported to the CEO and the COVID-19 Committee, who will in turn report the case to the local public health authority. In general, a person with direct contact will have already been reached by the local health public authority. This step ensures notification in the event that this has not occurred; for example, if tracing of an exposure is still being performed.

3. Within the past 14 days, have you traveled to an area subject to a Level 3 CDC Travel Health Notice (See Appendix)?

If YES, the employee will not be permitted to work. Refer to the section of this policy for “Staff returning from international travel to an area subject to a Level 3 CDC Travel Health Notice.

**Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
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CDC Travel Notices: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

CDC Europe List: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/coronavirus-europe>

- China
- Iran

- South Korea

Most of Europe (A – L)

- Austria
- Belgium
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania

Most of Europe (M – Z)

- Malta
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Monaco
- San Marino
- Vatican City