



July 10, 2020

Reintroduction of Individuals to Certified Residences After Extended Home Visits

On March 24, 2020, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) issued “Health Advisory: COVID-19 Suspension of Community Outings and Home Visits”, which suspended community outings and home visits for individuals living in certified residential facilities. This policy aimed to safeguard and maintain the health and wellbeing of residents and staff, while containing and preventing the spread of COVID-19.

After the successful efforts of New Yorkers to flatten the curve and reduce virus transmission, OPWDD recognizes the need for individuals to return to certified residential facilities, following extended stays with family. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure the return of individuals is done as safely as possible. Effective July 15, 2020 for regions of the State that have entered into Phase Four in accordance the New York Forward Reopening Plan, individuals may return to their residence in accordance with the requirements herein.

Individuals Returning to Their Residential Facility

Any individual on a home visit during the implementation of the March 24, 2020 guidance, or who thereafter went on a home visit, who desires to now return to the residential facility must be permitted to do so consistent with this guidance. To safely accept an individual back to the home, the following conditions must be met:

- In the 14 days preceding the individual’s return, the residential facility must have no known or suspected cases of COVID-19;
- The individual must have not knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19; and
- Confirm that for the 14 days prior to the individual’s return to the facility, the individual confirm in writing that the individual did not display any of the following symptoms in the 14 days prior to return:
 - Fever of 100.0°F or greater;
 - Cough;
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
 - Chills;
 - Muscle aches;
 - Headache;
 - Sore throat;
 - Abdominal pain;
 - Vomiting;
 - Diarrhea;
 - Runny nose;
 - Fatigue;
 - Wheezing; and/or
 - New loss of taste or smell.

If any of these symptoms are noted, the family should be referred to their medical provider or the Local Department of Health for assessment and testing.

Facilities should observe returning residents for signs and symptoms of illness for 14 days after return to the residential facility.

Please note that an individual returning to a residential facility following an extended home visit may need to follow precautionary quarantine measures upon return, which should be implemented in collaboration with the Local Department of Health. The residential facility shall additionally periodically review the Covid-19 Travel

Advisory website: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>. A negative test prior to entry will not eliminate the need for such quarantine.