

For Additional Information Contact:

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### **Continuity of Operations at Allen County Board of DD**

March 20, 2020

The Allen County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Board) has been closely monitoring the COVID-19 outbreak with the guidance of Allen County Public Health, Allen County EMA, Ohio Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control, and State of Ohio daily briefings.

Health authorities have indicated that the situation is evolving, and we need to do all we can to inform those we serve and ourselves of measures we can take to prevent the spread of the virus. We have implemented many strategies over the past five days to aid in this mission. One of our key goals is to assist those we serve, so they do not feel isolation and fear at this time. To that end, our employees continue to carry out our mission.

In this critical time, we are working collaboratively, operating differently, and being proactive to limit the spread of COVID-19, while meeting the needs of those we serve. During the state of emergency, we fully realize there are many day-to-day issues that will require flexibility from normal operations. While our agency represents nearly 100 staff, we serve around 1,000 people and have countless provider partners that depend on us during times such as these. We are implementing state guidance as we receive it. Here are some of the initiatives we have taken during the past week:

- The Board remains open and operating. The buildings are now closed to visitors, with special accommodations for some vital provider services, such as finger prints. This must be by appointment, and the person cannot be ill when asking for this service.
- All social, recreational, volunteer, and self-advocacy activities of the Board are suspended at this time. All DD month activities have been cancelled. PLAYTIME has been suspended until further notice.
- Marimor School closed at the end of the day on March 16, 2020. It will remain closed until at least April 6, 2020. Instructors are working remotely to communicate with families. We are delivering lunch meals to students each day.
- Out-of-county travel is restricted and in county is limited. We are implementing an aggressive technology plan for remote work for the majority of our employees.
- Home visits, unless for critical and essential needs, are temporarily suspended. Face-to-face meetings are suspended until further notice.
- We have been moving to a remote work plan. As of Monday, March 23, the majority of our staff will be working remotely. Others will follow suit in the days to come. Our

community and those we serve will see little disruption in reaching a staff member. Our 24/7 on-call service continues to be operational.

- We have named Karen McCullough, one of our long-term dedicated staff, as the point person to receive calls and requests from our provider community. You can reach her at [kmccullough@acbdd.org](mailto:kmccullough@acbdd.org).
- We have implemented extensive cleaning protocols in all buildings, are practicing social distancing, limiting the size of meetings to 10 or less, and monitoring the health of our employees. We are providing Personal Protective Equipment to our staff, as needed.
- We have deployed employees to residential providers to help fill the gaps in staffing residential homes, where individuals need daily services for their health and safety.

It is important that we do not panic or create panic for those we serve. At the same time, we want people to be informed. For direct factual information or assurances, the Ohio Department of Health can be contacted at 1-833-427-5634, anytime between 9:00 am and 8:00 pm. Mercy Health and Lima Memorial have set up a community call center and can be reached at 419-226-9000 for questions regarding COVID-19.

We appreciate the great work of Allen County Public Health, Allen County EMA, and the Ohio Department of Health. We will continue our efforts to promote safe, preventable measures for those we serve and ourselves. We will continue to monitor and advise accordingly if different measures are needed.