

Last issued: December 28, 2021 Rescinded June 20, 2023
Revised: June 20, 2023

Revised Protocols for Personnel in Clinical and Direct Care Settings to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure or Infection

This advisory supersedes prior guidance from the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) pertaining to the COVID-19 outbreak, entitled “Revised COVID-19 Protocols for Direct Care Staff to Return to Work,” dated December 28, 2021. This guidance applies to all facilities and services certified by OPWDD. The information contained within this document is consistent with updated recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding managing personnel who have been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 and will provide information on when staff may return to work after having tested positive.

A. Staff Assigned to Work in an Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA)

Staff in IRAs certified by OPWDD should follow the community standard for isolation and precautions.

1. If you test positive for COVID, you should stay home and isolate for 5 days.
2. You may end isolation after day 5 if symptoms are improving and you are fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication.
3. When you return to work, you must wear a mask through day 10.

Additional information on this may be found at

[Isolation: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fyour-health%2Fquarantine-isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fyour-health%2Fquarantine-isolation.html)

[Exposure: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html)

B. Staff Assigned to Work in an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF)

Staff in ICFs must follow certain criteria to determine when they can return to work. This is dependent on the severity of symptoms and the presence of immunocompromising conditions.

Guidance and criteria regarding return to work in an ICF can be found at:

CDC: Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2

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

C. Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages in an ICF affected by COVID

Maintaining appropriate staffing in healthcare facilities is essential to providing a safe work environment and to maintain the health and safety of the individuals supported. Maximizing interventions to protect staff, the individuals supported, and visitors is critical at all times, including when considering strategies to address staffing shortages. The CDC has provided mitigation strategies that offer a continuum of options for addressing staffing shortages. Contingency strategies, followed by crisis strategies are provided to augment conventional strategies and are meant to be considered and implemented sequentially.

Guidance for **ICFs** that are expecting or experiencing staffing shortages **due to COVID-19** can be found at:

CDC: Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortage

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mitigating-staff-shortages.html>

D. Guidelines for Exposed Staff Regardless of Setting

- Staff do not need to follow precautions, if at the time of exposure, they were wearing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (i.e., well-fitting mask).
- Staff who are not wearing the appropriate PPE must wear a well-fitting mask after an exposure.
- Staff who are exposed may continue to work, while wearing a well-fitting mask, as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Staff who are exposed and become symptomatic should begin isolation and follow CDC recommendations on testing. Information on this can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>

General questions or comments about this advisory can be sent to the OPWDD Statewide Director of Nursing at: nursingandhealthservices@opwdd.ny.gov