Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Day Activity and Health Services
Frequently Asked Questions
8/29/2022

On March 13, 2020, and in subsequent renewals, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is committed to sharing pertinent COVID-19 information with all day activity and health services (DAHS) providers via this regularly updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document.

With each update, this document will be arranged by topic, and if guidance changes from a previous update, it will be noted in red font. Questions regarding this document should be directed to Long-term Care Regulation, Policy and Rules, at 512-438-3161 or LTCRPolicy@hhs.texas.gov.

DAHS COVID-19 Response Plan

Are masks required in a DAHS facility?
Answer: Governor Abbott's Order GA-36 prohibits HHSC from mandating masks in DAHS facilities; however, a facility must develop and enforce policies and procedures that ensure infection control practices, including whether staff, visitors or clients must wear a face mask, face covering, or appropriate PPE.

CDC Updates on Vaccinations and boosters
Answer: COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States are effective at protecting people—especially those who are boosted—from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and even dying. As with other diseases, you are protected best from COVID-19 when you stay up to date with the recommended vaccines. To remain up to date with CDC recommendation please visit: Stay Up to Date with Your COVID-19 Vaccines
Where can I find information on the COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination?
Answer: The link below is a website that is updated regularly by the CDC. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notices.html

What are some key updates from the CDC related to COVID-19?
Answer: In an effort to keep up with the changing CDC recommendations here are links to help keep you up to date:

- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic
- Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2
- Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages
- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes

Client Activities and Dining

Can a DAHS have visitors and community activities?
Answer: On July 21, 2022, the DAHS COVID-19 emergency rules expired and will not be renewed. Effective July 22, 2022, facilities can return to regular visitation and activities. Facilities must continue to follow all infection and prevention control related policies and procedures while conducting activities, during visitation and while dining in the facility.

- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic
- Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2
- Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages
- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes

How does a facility that provides transportation services transport clients safely?
Answer: The CDC has published guidelines for the cleaning and disinfection for non-emergency transport vehicles. When a DAHS facility is transporting a client known or suspected to be COVID-19 positive, the CDC recommends that the driver wear an N95 respirator or facemask (if a respirator is not available), as well as eye protection such as a face shield or goggles (as
long as its use does not create a driving hazard).

COVID Testing and Reporting

<Update>If a client’s family member has tested positive, what are guidelines for this client or person?

Answer: The facility must follow their infection control policy and procedures. If the facility believes a client has been infected, it needs to ensure the client does not attend the DAHS until the person is fully recovered and symptom free. The facility could use the CDC guidance for returning employees as a guide for allowing clients back to the DAHS on a regular basis.

If a client is positive for COVID-19, must we notify families of other clients?

Answer: The facility is obligated to notify families and other clients if a client who is at the DAHS has tested positive and other clients might have been exposed. Consult with your attorney concerning what information, if any, the facility is authorized to disclose in a situation to families of other clients, as well as how to make any authorized disclosure in compliance with applicable laws protecting client privacy.

<Updated>How do providers report confirmed cases of COVID-19?

Answer: Effective July 22nd, 2022, DAHS facilities are no longer required to report positive cases of COVID-19 in staff or clients HHSC via CII or TULIP. DAHS facilities are still required to report positive COVID-19 cases, only if the client gets COVID at the DAHS and the DAHS has tested for it, to their local health department, or the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) if there is no local health department. It is not necessary to double report a confirmed case to both the local health department and DSHS. You are advised to report to the local health entity.

For a list of local health entities and public health offices, refer to https://dshs.texas.gov/regions/2019-nCoV-Local-Health-Entities/

COVID Screening and Documentation

<Updated>Do DAHS facilities need to document screenings for people entering the facility?

Answer: Effective July 21, 2022 the DAHS COVID-19 emergency rules expired and will not be renewed. As of July 22, 2022, DAHS facilities are no longer
required to screen or document screenings but must still follow the facility’s infection control policy and procedures.

**Facility**

**Can we have in-person assessments for new clients?**

*Answer:* Yes. In-person client assessments can take place at a DAHS facility for potential new clients as long as all facility infection and prevention control policy measures are followed.

**DAHS Contracting**

**Whom do we contact with questions about Medicaid reimbursement?**

*Answer:* You would need to contact your contracting entity or managed care organization for questions regarding Medicaid reimbursement. Long-term care policy and rules cannot answer questions about this issue.

**Whom do we notify if our DAHS decides to close?**

*Answer:* If a DAHS provider decides to close, it must notify the regional program manager, who will then notify HHSC long-term care licensing. Providers must also report the facility closure in TULIP and contact their contracting entity, if appropriate.

**Can a DAHS facility alter its hours of operation and if so, must it notify HHSC?**

*Answer:* A contracted DAHS facility should contact HHSC or the managed care organization, as appropriate, to discuss altering hours. A licensed-only DAHS facility can alter hours of operation as long as clients and staff are notified of the change. 26 TAC §559.61(e) states that all facilities must prominently and conspicuously post for display in a public area of the facility that is readily available to clients, employees, and visitors a brochure or letter that outlines the facility's hours of operation, holidays, and a description of activities offered.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

**What do I do if I cannot find PPE?**

*Answer:* DAHS providers who are having difficulty obtaining PPE should follow national guidelines for optimizing their current supply or identify the next best option to care for clients receiving services while protecting staff. If providers...
are unable to obtain PPE for reasons outside their control, HHSC surveyors will not cite them. For the most current guidance on the use of PPE and how to conserve it, access resources from DSHS and CDC.

The CDC COVID-19 website has sections for health care professionals and health care facilities. The CDC also has specific information relating to:

Healthcare Supply of PPE
Strategies to Optimize PPE and Equipment
Strategies to Optimize Eye Protection
Strategies to Optimize Isolation Gowns
Strategies to Optimize Face Masks
Strategies to Optimize N-95 Respirators
Crisis Alternate Strategies for N-95 Respirators

Staff

What is the CDC guidance on staffing?

Answer: The CDC’s Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 details guidance for providers to determine the duration of staff restrictions based on infection and exposure. Follow the Conventional, Continency, and Crisis columns on the provided table where applicable.

Do fully vaccinated staff with higher-risk exposure need to be restricted from work for 14 days following exposure?

Answer: No. The CDC has provided updated guidance for Return to Work Criteria for HCP with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Infection and the Quarantine and Isolation guidelines. Due to the rapidly changing nature of the CDC’s return to work, quarantine, and isolation guidelines, facilities must visit the CDC’s website and review the guidance to select which return to work situation is applicable.

<Updated> What are the CDC recommendations for health-care personnel who require a TB test?

Answer: Refer to PL 2020-25 for guidance.

Vaccine

How do I report an adverse reaction to a vaccination?

Answer: If a client or staff member has an adverse reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine, the facility should report it through the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). VAERS accepts reports from anyone. Clients, caregivers, and healthcare providers (HCP) are encouraged to report adverse
events after vaccination to VAERS even if it is not clear that the vaccine caused the adverse event.

**What about the use of Tylenol or ibuprofen before getting a vaccine?**

Answer: A person should not take prophylactic medicine before getting a vaccine. If a person develops fever or pain after a vaccination, the person can take such medications for fever or pain, as long as it is approved by the person's doctor.

From [CDC’s mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-side-effects.html): Antipyretic or analgesic medications (e.g., acetaminophen, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) may be taken for the treatment of post-vaccination local or systemic symptoms, if medically appropriate. However, routine prophylactic administration of these medications for the purpose of preventing post-vaccination symptoms is not currently recommended, as information on the impact of such use on mRNA COVID-19 vaccine-induced antibody responses is not available at this time.

**References**

**Where can I find the Infection Control Checklist?**

Answer: The infection control checklist can be found on the DAHS provider portal at: [DAHS Provider Infection Control Checklist Tool (PDF)](https://www2.dahs.org/dahs/dahsproviderportal/DaHSProviderInfectionControlChecklistTool.pdf)

**Where can I find information on N95 respirator and fit-testing information and resources?**

Answer: The OSHA Respiratory Protection eTool is a great one-stop page for N95 respirator and fit-testing information and resources. OSHA Respiratory Protection eTool Respiratory Basics: [https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory/respirator_basics.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory/respirator_basics.html)

**Where do DAHS providers go for COVID-19 information?**

Answer: Reliable sources of information include:

- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov)
- [The Texas Department of State Health Services](https://www.dshs.state.tx.us)
- [DAHS Provider Portal](https://www2.dahs.org/dahs/dahsproviderportal)

**What is the Environmental Protection Agency’s List N? And where can I find it?**
Answer: All products on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) List N meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. To find a product, enter the first two sets of the product’s EPA registration number into the search bar of the Search by EPA registration number page. You can find this number by looking for the EPA Registration number (Reg. No.) on the product label.

The EPA gives the following example on its website: “If EPA Reg. No. 12345-12 is on List N, you can buy EPA Reg. No. 12345-12-2567 and know you’re getting an equivalent product.”