



REACH

Resource for Education, Advocacy,
Communication and Housing

September 28, 2020

Dear REACH Families,

The Covid-19 pandemic and our collective efforts to slow the spread of the disease has significantly impacted REACH's ability to provide in-person services without substantial risk to the health and well-being of both consumers and staff. Many of the services we traditionally provide including speech therapy, assistive technology, as well as day program services are normally provided in-person and often one-on-one. The nature of this virus however has forced us to look for alternative ways to provide these services including virtual as well as via phone and teleconference, in an effort to continue serving our consumers while also doing our very best to keep consumers, staff and the community at large safe.

Covid-19 continues to be a highly contagious disease having resulted in the loss of more than 200,000 lives in the United States and nearly 1,000,000 lives globally, and more are projected before the end of the year. Both REACH staff and consumers have been diagnosed with Covid-19 through indirect and direct exposures and sadly, have lost family members and friends due to Covid-19. My family was also hit hard by Covid-19 with my family member contracting the disease and experiencing the more serious of complications. This disease has affected us all and continues to wreak havoc on our nation making many of us feel powerless and unsure of what to do and how to best support our loved ones in their daily lives. In an effort to do our part, we have continued to wear face coverings and participate in social distancing, even from those we care most about in an effort to keep them safe and healthy. Out of an abundance of caution, we have not resumed in-person services outside of our Supported Living and Individual Services programs due to the devastating effects of Covid-19.

There is still so much about this disease that we do not know and there is currently no approved vaccine available for Covid-19. From the information provided to the public, we do know that Covid-19 disproportionately affects persons of color mainly Latinos and African-Americans, older adults, as well as persons with underlying health conditions including those with co-morbid conditions, making those persons highly susceptible to serious complications from the disease including being at a higher risk for fatalities. Many of our consumers and staff fall into these respective categories which has forced us to respond to this virus in a cautious, empathetic and deliberate way to help mitigate the impact of this virus.

Governor Gavin Newsom and the State of California recently developed a 4-tier (yellow, orange, red and purple) color-coded system for Covid per County. Yellow indicates minimal Covid-19 spread and allows for nearly all businesses to reopen indoor operations (as long as physical distancing and face-covering requirements

are in place). Purple means there is widespread Covid-19 transmission in the county and nearly all businesses have to keep indoor operations closed or severely limited.

Los Angeles County remains at the highest level of alert (purple) as Covid is currently seen as “Widespread” indicating that the county has more than 7 daily new cases per 100,000 residents or higher than 8% positivity rate. Again, we will continue to monitor these alerts and will notify you as soon as we begin to move in a favorable direction that will allow us to reopen and resume normal operations.

As we look at future plans for reopening, we will also continue to monitor the availability of testing for Covid-19 as testing capacity must be readily available when REACH reopens. When an individual has been exposed to Covid-19 or is showing symptoms of the virus, we adhere to the CDC guidelines of quarantining and or self isolating those individuals until they can be tested before being allowed to remain at work and potentially infecting other consumers and staff. Testing is currently not readily available and if so, results can take anywhere from 2-14 days. During that time frame and until results are received, that employee is not allowed to work and anyone that they may have come into contact with, needs to be traced. This would inevitably cause a significant disruption to our ability to consistently provide services by reopening without reliable and readily available testing for Covid-19.

We understand that nothing about this situation is ideal. We are forced in real-time to make tough decisions on how we operate in hopes of saving lives. We also understand the mental toll Covid-19 continues to have on many of us and in the days ahead, my team and I will be brainstorming additional ways in which we can provide activities monthly to help address the added stress this situation has caused. For now, we invite you to continue to participate in the availability of art kits as well as the Zoom fitness and educational opportunities that are currently available virtually.

We also continue to monitor and follow the directives from the CDC and our local and public health departments in regards to Covid-19. Our goal is to get back to serving consumers and families in-person as soon as we reasonably and realistically can do so. We thank you for your patience as again, we understand that this entire situation is any thing but ideal. Our primary concern however remains keeping our consumers and staff safe to the best of our ability as we work to navigate through this unprecedented crisis together. Prior to re-opening, there will be a Virtual Parent Forum where families will be able to hear about the policies and protocols including mask mandates, cleaning schedules and detailed information on how we plan to keep consumers and staff safe once they officially return to REACH. Until then, we ask that you continue to be patient with us as we go through the proper steps to reopen safely.

Until then, we will continue to keep you and your families in our thoughts and prayers and look forward to getting back to some sense of normalcy soon. Stay safe!

Dr. Felita Jones
Chief Executive Officer, REACH

P.S. We successfully distributed PPE supplies to REACH families including masks, face shields and hand sanitizer to nearly 100 families and will be working to also distribute back to school supplies to the first 150 families at our Halloween Drive Thru Event scheduled for October 31st from 4-7pm.