



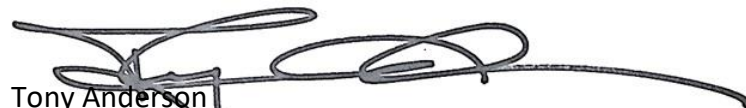
**Message to Staff:** VMRC's response to COVID-19 on March 13, 2020

I know many of you have many new questions about what we should do to ensure the health and safety of our consumers and staff and community in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. As of late night last night we were still getting new directives from the Department of Developmental Services and Public Health. This document is the first response to many of your questions we've received just in the last couple of days. This is a rapidly changing situation for us at VMRC as well as our local, state, national, and global communities and we expect this document to be updated regularly. We will continue to post information through email, website, inside exchange, social media, and any other way we can get it to you.

The senior leadership has been sharply focused on making sure we get you the accurate information for our region and our community of people with developmental disabilities. Finally the directives in this FAQ may seem to some overly dramatic but we have taken a position of abundance of caution at this time and while we cannot assure your complete protection against coming in contact with the virus we can do everything in our power to significantly decrease your chance for exposure.

As of today Valley Mountain Regional Center has no known cases of consumers testing positive for COVID-19 (March 13, 2020) but we are aware 2 people who have not gotten their tests back (though both were described by health professionals as very low risk). Please for your safety and the safety of others practice the universal precautions especially the hand washing with soap.

Sincerely



Tony Anderson  
Executive Director

## Questions from Vendors, Consumers, and Families

**1. Will VMRC recommend keeping consumers in their homes or care homes and not going to day programs?**

As of now to remain consistent with the directives from DDS and other state departments, those with a high risk (elderly and people with vulnerable health conditions) should not attend large group gatherings. Any healthy adult should not be restricted in their community access including day program services.

**2. Will consumers be at risk of losing their placements for not attending?**

No. Absence during these times should not penalize consumers for following our guidance. DDS has taken steps to mitigate the financial impact.

**3. Is there PATCH funding available for the care homes if they keep their residents home?**

The Director of the Department of Developmental Services has issued a series of directives waiving certain restrictions on regional centers and one of these directives is meant to provide relief to the residential services providers. The Directive gives the regional center director authority “to grant rate adjustments for residential services and/or supplemental services in residential settings, consistent with Welfare and Institutions Code sections 4681.6, 4689.8 and 4691.9, to protect a consumer’s health or safety as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19.” Patch is a supplemental service in residential settings. (See the DDS March 12, 2020 Directive, “DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE ON REQUIREMENTS WAIVED DUE TO COVID-19”.)

**4. Can we do tele Comp, ABA, PT and OT for Early Start services?**

Yes, as long as the services are provided within the scope of practice of the professional AND the family requests remote service delivery as outlined in the DDS March 12, 2020 Directive, “DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE ON REQUIREMENTS WAIVED DUE TO COVID-19”

**5. ES programs are worried as they only get paid for face to face visits. Some were concerned about families cancelling scheduled appointments due to concerns about contracting COVID 19. The majority of the children in ES could be considered high risk.**

The Governor’s Executive order N-25-20 waives the requirement for face to face visit only if the family requests remote service delivery as outlined in the DDS March 12, 2020 Directive, “DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE ON REQUIREMENTS WAIVED DUE TO COVID-19”.

**6. If a consumer has a fever, what are the procedures?**

When a consumer has a fever they should follow standard care procedures:

- The person should not be around others and should be at home resting.

- Their home setting should be continuously disinfected to stop the spread of germs.
- Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen as directed on the label.
- Bathing or sponging in lukewarm water may bring the temperature down. Do not use cold water or alcohol.
- Have the person wear light clothing and use a light cover or sheet. If the person gets chills, use an extra blanket until they go away.
- Have the person drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Consult a health care professional.
- Wait until you have no fever for 24 hours without taking any over the counter medications before you go back to your work, school or day program.

However, if the consumer is elderly or has a current vulnerable health condition, then a doctor or other qualified health professional should be consulted immediately.

**7. If someone appears to have a fever, should we call 911?**

No

**8. Will VMRC continue to host scheduled trainings and meetings?**

For the next 30 days Valley Mountain Regional Center will be engaged in a heightened social distancing effort for the safety of our community and in an abundance of caution. As of now we have postponed our five Transition Fairs throughout our region, Bi-Annual Management Training, Person-Centered Thinking sessions, Six POS Disparity Public Forums, A large IHSS training for parents, and several other large gatherings with over 20 people.

**9. Any directives from VMRC about keeping consumers home from day program. What is "against their rights" versus their wellbeing especially in an elderly home.**

Pursuant to WIC section 4639.6, to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and consistent with the California Department of Public Health's recommendations for individuals who are at higher risk for serious illness, the Director of the Department is directing regional centers to take immediate action to ensure consumers who have compromised immune systems or who are more susceptible to respiratory illness, and/or who reside in the following home types, remain home rather than attend day services outside the home:

- a. Adult Residential Facilities for Persons with Special Health Care Needs
- b. Intermediate Care Facilities/Developmentally Disabled-Nursing
- c. Intermediate Care Facilities/Developmentally Disabled-Continuous Nursing

The Governor has declare a "State of Emergency" so for the next 30 days (extended if necessary) this restriction will remain in effect.

**10. How are we helping care homes prepare (Instructions re: stocking up with canned food, frozen foods, etc.).**

Homes have a standard plan for maintaining the required supply of food outlined in their program designs. If a home were to be completely ordered to quarantine and no one was allowed to leave the home, they should use the grocery delivery service from the local grocery store, and they should contact their community liaison if the delivery restrictions prohibit delivery to their location.

## **FAQs from Staff**

**1. Should we be visiting family homes, care homes and day programs to see consumers?**

Yes. It is okay to continue to meet with consumers, however, prior to your visit, we recommend that you:

- Contact the home and ask if anyone in the home is ill, has traveled recently, or been exposed to anyone who has Coronavirus symptoms.
- If you are not able to get the above questions answered, leave a voice message to reschedule at least 2 weeks out.
- Complete a Title 19 note regarding this effort and responses.
- If the answer to any of the above questions is yes, reschedule the meeting at least 2 weeks out.
- If you get to a meeting and it appears that someone is ill, end the meeting immediately and reschedule the meeting at least 2 weeks out and complete a Title 19 note.
- All of the above procedures are required when a meeting is scheduled to take place at the regional center as well.

**2. Should we hold our meetings via telephone?**

At this time, the preferred format for meetings with consumers will be remote except for the mandatory face to face meetings. These mandatory In-person meetings such as Individual Program Planning, Individual Family Service Planning, and others can now be conducted remotely IF the consumer, their representative or family requests remote planning meetings to be delivered as outlined in the DDS March 12, 2020 Directive, "DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE ON REQUIREMENTS WAIVED DUE TO COVID-19".

**3. What about upcoming events? Transition Fairs? POS Disparity Meetings? Outreach Events? Trainings?**

For the next 30 days, Valley Mountain Regional Center will be engaged in a heightened social distancing effort for the safety of our community and in an abundance of caution. As of now we have postponed our five Transition Fairs throughout our region, Bi-Annual Management Training, Person-Centered Thinking sessions, Six POS Disparity Public Forums, A large IHSS training for parents, and several other large gatherings with over 20 people.

**4. Should I work from home?**

If you have an approved work from home plan you should work from home as much as possible. You may first need to expand the scope of your plan and complete your schedule/outcomes report daily with your supervisor.

**5. What about OTs and other staff that can't work from home?**

Any staff that is unable or unwilling to work from home is completely welcome to work in the office. The purpose for expanding work from home at this time is to lessen the probability of the spread of COVID-19. It cannot isolate us all 100% but it is one effort to decrease the spread and increase your safety.

**6. What do we do if the office gets shut down?**

If the office were to be shut down and you were unable to perform any work duties you would not lose pay or be required to take leave time.

**7. Should we be doing our unannounced visits?**

Yes. Unannounced visits are an important tool for ensuring quality. If you are conducting an unannounced visit, when you get to the location, you should ask an individual in charge if anyone is presenting with a fever or respiratory illness. If there is an individual who is ill then postpone this unannounced review.

**8. How do we get more hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes for the offices?**

We have ordered these from our suppliers and expect to receive them. Manufacturers have been ramping up production and expect a flood on the market soon.

**9. Will we still have Telemedicine?**

Yes. This is a small meeting but extra cleanliness should be practiced. We'll watch this one closely as this could change.

**10. Why have we not received our kits yet?**

We did not anticipate a run on the stock of hand sanitizers and disinfectant wipes and initially we were told by a second supplier that the order was confirmed and being delivered only to later find out that it was sold and delivered to someone else. Our supplies are still on back order. We do have some supplies that were going to go into the packet and we will work on stuffing the packets for ready use by Tuesday (one more item is arriving on Monday).

**11. Can SCs have expanded WAH options**

Yes, see #4.

**12. How to document consent when doing an IPP by phone.**

The reporting process is described in the DDS March 12, 2020 Directive, "DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE ON REQUIREMENTS WAIVED DUE TO COVID-19".

*The regional center shall send a follow-up letter to the consumer and/or representative, in the consumer and/or representative's preferred language, confirming that at the consumer's or representative's request, a virtual or remote visit was conducted in lieu of a face-to-face meeting or visit. The letter shall include contact information for the consumer's service coordinator and their supervisor.*

**13. Some staff are scared and wanting to know if they will be told to work at home?**

At this time, no staff is being required to work from home. It is likely that some staff will always be needed to be in the office but it is conceivable that there may be an escalation where the public will not be visiting. However, this is a worldwide pandemic and things are changing rapidly. You will know quickly if policies change and don't hesitate to ask questions as we go. We don't know your concerns if you don't tell us.

**14. Staff live in an affected area. Would they need to follow any quarantine and other suggestions given for that area?**

Yes. If your county has implemented strict movement of you or your local community you must follow those directives and inform your supervisor of these restrictions.

**Important Directives and Links from State and County Officials:**

- [DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE ON REQUIREMENTS WAIVED DUE TO COVID-19](#)
- [State Health & Emergency Officials Announce Latest COVID-19 Facts \(San Joaquin\)](#)
- [DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE ON DAY SERVICES FOR CONSUMERS AT HIGH RISK](#) FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS DUE TO COVID-19 and STATE OF EMERGENCY STATEWIDE