



March 20, 2020

Dear families,

At North Suffolk Mental Health Association, the health and well-being of our residents, clients staff and families are our highest priority and we take very seriously the responsibility of keeping everyone safe during these unprecedented times. Information changes rapidly and often, and we are continuously monitoring new developments, taking guidance from the Massachusetts departments of Public Health, Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and the federal Centers for Disease Control.

Many of our residents are among the most vulnerable individuals in our community. You have entrusted them to our care, and we take that responsibility very seriously. As the coronavirus spreads in Massachusetts, the precautions we have implemented include:

- Screening all staff, visitors, vendors and clients for symptoms of coronavirus/COVID-19 or the flu;
- Advising staff and residents on how to maintain good hygiene to stop or limit the spread of germs in our residences, including hand-washing, use of hand sanitizer; and covering coughs/sneezes. Reminders are also posted;
- Practicing social distancing;
- Urging anyone who feels ill to stay home; and
- Enhancing daily cleaning, especially in high-touch areas such as door knobs, TV remotes, faucet handles and other surfaces. We also remind clients not to share devices or utensils and refrain from hugs and handshakes.

Beginning Monday, March 23, 2020, no visitors will be allowed in the residences due to the highly contagious nature of coronavirus and how quickly it spreads. This decision is not made lightly, and it is made based on guidance from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, DPH and the CDC. As an agency, we have always encouraged visitation at our residences as a part of our clients' growth and recovery and to promote strong, healthy relationships and will resume that practice as soon as the COVID-19 threat has passed.

We understand that this restriction on family and community interactions will be difficult for residents, so we are encouraging you to reach out by other means of communication such as phone calls, text messages and video calls such as FaceTime or Messenger.

If you want to check on family members, please call their program manager. The program manager or a staff member will also be able to help residents with FaceTime or other communication.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. This is new and stressful for all of us, but we must work together to keep your loved ones and our staff safe, and for our collective well-being.

Sincerely,

Joyce Troisi
Director of Residential Services

Judi Lemoine
Chief Operating Officer