



March 18, 2020

Attn: Individualized Residential Alternatives, Community Residences and Private Schools

**Health Advisory: COVID-19 Guidance for Operators of  
Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs), Community  
Residences (CRs) and Private Schools Regarding Visitation**

**Please distribute immediately to:**

Administrators, Infection Preventionists, Medical Directors, Physicians,  
Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Nursing Staff, Risk  
Managers, Public Affairs, Direct Support Professionals, Treatment  
Team Leaders, House Managers and to all units of the IRA, CR and  
Private School

COVID-19 has been detected in multiple communities around New York State. Visitors may introduce COVID-19 infection into the facility. The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is issuing the following guidance regarding visitors to IRAs, CRs and Private Schools and other precautions and procedures such facilities must take to protect and maintain the health and safety of their residents and staff during the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

To prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into IRAs, CRs and Private Schools:

Effective immediately, suspend all visitation except when medically or clinically necessary (i.e. visitor is essential to the care of the resident). In addition:

- Any visitors meeting these exceptions must be screened for symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, or fever) or potential exposure to someone with COVID-19 and the duration and number of visits should be minimized.
- IRAs, CRs and Private Schools should attempt to provide other forms of communication to meet the needs of their residents.
- IRAs, CRs and Private Schools must post signage notifying the public of the suspension of visitation in all facility entrances and in parking lots. In addition, these policies should be posted to the facility's website and social media pages.

Thank you for your efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19.