

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Provider Masking Policies for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) ODP Announcement 22-047

AUDIENCE:

All stakeholders

PURPOSE:

To provide information and resources to the field in support of developing masking policies.

DISCUSSION:

Currently, there are no masking requirements from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Department of Human Services, or the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). Depending on setting and location, individuals may need to comply with applicable federal or local masking requirements.

ODP expects providers to develop a layered protection strategy for COVID-19. Masking is an integral and important layer of this protection strategy.

In establishing a masking policy for your agency or settings within your agency, ODP advises that you consider available guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- The ADA is not provided nor overseen by the ODP. ODP cannot provide interpretation or guidance to providers on how to meet the regulation and guidance of the ADA.
- The CDC guidelines for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Adult Day Programs are not in perfect alignment. For example, they conflict on recommendations for mask wearing. In these instances of conflict, please

incorporate the best practice for your program to ensure that your layered protection strategy against COVID-19 is robust.

- The CDC guidance for Community Group Homes has been archived. The CDC is no longer updating this web page and it may not reflect the CDC's current COVID-19 guidance. Planning for identification and control of COVID-19's spread within a group home (GH) will need to be individually tailored for the GH and its residents. Community Group Home providers should:
 - Follow the CDC guidance for DSPs.
 - Please review the guidance for ["long-term care facilities and nursing homes,"](#) ["assisted living facilities,"](#) ["retirement communities and independent living facilities,"](#) and ["shared or congregate housing"](#) and incorporate the best practices for your program, ensuring that your layered protection strategy against COVID-19 is robust.

These resources are provided for consideration when developing your policies. The provision of these resources should not be interpreted to be a complete or priority listing.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [COVID-19 Information and Resources for People with Disabilities \(https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevlopment/covid-19/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevlopment/covid-19/index.html)

[COVID-19 Guidance for Adult Day Services Centers \(https://www.cdc.gov/aging/covid19/adult-day-care-service-centers.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/aging/covid19/adult-day-care-service-centers.html)

[COVID-19 Guidance for Direct Service Providers \(https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevlopment/covid-19/guidance-for-direct-service-providers.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevlopment/covid-19/guidance-for-direct-service-providers.html)

[Use and Care of Masks for the General Public \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html)

Southeast ADA Center [The ADA and Face Mask Policies \(https://adasoutheast.org/disability-issues/ada-and-face-mask-policies/\)](https://adasoutheast.org/disability-issues/ada-and-face-mask-policies/)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws>)

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) [Providing Accommodations](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/providing-accommodations/) (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/providing-accommodations/>)

For providers that need additional assistance, the [Long-Term Care Resiliency, Infrastructure Supports, and Empowerment](#) (LTC RISE) and [Health Care Quality Units](#) (HCQUs) are available to support providers in the development of a layered protection strategy for COVID-19:

- [LTC RISE](#)
 - Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs)
 - Provider organizations operating licensed community homes, licensed prevocational or adult training facilities
- The [HCQU](#) and [Infectious Disease \(ID\) Connect](#)
 - All ODP home and community-based service (HCBS) providers

If you have any questions related to the ADA, please consult your legal and executive administration teams. If you have questions about this announcement, please contact RA-PWODPEMRGNCYRSPRQ@pa.gov.