



State of Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Aging and Adult Services
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

MEMORANDUM

OCDD-R-20-003

OCDD-P-20-009

OAAS-R-20-008

OAAS-P-20-001

DATE: March 22, 2020

TO: Personal Care Attendant Agencies
Participants using Self-Direction

FROM: Sherlyn Sullivan, OAAS Interim Assistant Secretary
Julie Foster Hagan, OCDD Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Requirements of Personal Care Attendant Agencies and Direct Support Professionals during COVID 19 Public Health Emergency

To protect the health and safety of individuals during the COVID-19 public health emergency, Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS) and Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) are providing the following directive to licensed Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Agencies and Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) serving individuals in Medicaid waiver and Long Term Personal Care Services (LTPCS) programs.

- Employees of licensed **PCA agencies and DSPs** who provide services in OAAS and OCDD programs **are considered Essential Healthcare Employees** in the COVID-19 response.
 - This means that DSPs will be exempted from some of the restrictions that apply to the general population during this emergency. Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is providing a letter that PCA agencies and DSPs can use to verify their status as essential employees if needed, for instance, in order to travel within the community.
- When necessary for the health and safety of participants, **DSPs are required to provide services in households where there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.** This is required when other paid, natural, or informal supports are unavailable to the participant.

- DSPs should take appropriate precautions and follow CDC guidance available at these websites:

http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-CP/HANs/20-16HANCVID-19_HomeCareGuidance_Patients03172020.pdf

http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-CP/HANs/20-15HANAttachment3-COVID-19_HomeCareGuidance_Providers.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>

<http://www.ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/hcp-return-work.html#confirmed-suspected>

- PCA agencies are responsible for obtaining and/or paying for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needed by the DSPs that they employ. OAAS and OCDD clients who are participating in self-direction are responsible for obtaining and/or paying for PPE to be used by DSPs.

Instructions for obtaining PPE can be found at this website:

<http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3884>

- **DSPs providing services in households where there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID 19 should not provide services to any other household.**
- **DSPs must not work if they are sick.** PCA Agencies must continue to screen employee health, and require/enforce sick leave for DSPs who have symptoms of infectious disease (i.e. fever, dry cough and/or shortness of breath). LDH recognizes the financial pressure this may create for DSPs and PCA agencies and is committed to pursuing assistance and relief as resources become available.
- DSPs should assist the service recipient to prepare in case the need arises to self-quarantine:
 - Make sure to have essential supplies (non-perishable food, toiletries, pet food, hygiene supplies and cleaning supplies) for at least two weeks.
 - Get an extra supply of regular prescription drug(s), if possible.

- For their own health and the health of participants, DSPs should take precautionary measures in **all** households:
 - Clean all counter tops and surfaces that are often touched by members of the household and by you, with a household cleaning/disinfectant spray. For example: counter tops, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets and bedside tables.
 - Wash your hands with soap and water often. If soap and water are not available use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.