

## Prime Care Response to COVID-19

Dear Prime Care Individuals and Families:

During this difficult and uncertain time, we are more committed than ever to partner with you to receive the services and supports needed to live your lives in the most meaningful way. Keeping our mission in mind, we continue to monitor the extent and impact of the Coronavirus, COVID-19 in our communities.

Please be assured that we are taking the necessary precautions based on the guidance and recommendations from a variety of sources, including the World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Disease Control (CDC), New York State Department of Health (DOH) and the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), as well as local and state offices.

Employees and individuals supported by Prime Care Coordination are living and working within impacted areas of the COVID-19 outbreak. As of this writing, there are both state operated and voluntary providers across the state that have put into place quarantines and/or additional protocols putting social distancing practices into place by restricting visitors, including Care Managers, to their programs to reduce exposure and continued spread of this virus, as recommended and encouraged by health and governmental offices. This same social distancing practice and visitor restrictions are in place at many hospitals, rehab facilities, nursing homes, and other similar institutions. In addition, there are individuals and families that we support that are requesting no in-person face-to-face contact from Care Managers due to COVID-19. This directly impacts the Care Manager's ability to provide service delivery under normal operating procedures and regulations, particularly around face-to-face requirements with assessments, Life Plans, monthly and quarterly visits, and other face-to-face supports.

On March 14, 2020, the New York State Department of Health issued [guidance](#) authorizing a temporary waiver of face-to-face requirements for Care Coordination Organization/Health Homes. This guidance will remain in effect until DOH determines it is appropriate to rescind it. In lieu of face-to-face contact, care managers will utilize telephonic or telehealth capabilities.

Based on the guidance as stated above, and the fact that this is a state-wide pandemic and Public Health Emergency, Prime Care Coordination will be implementing the alternative operating and service delivery strategies consistent with WHO, CDC, DOH and NYS guidance and with the primary goal of the health of people supported by Prime Care, their families, and employees ultimately assisting the overall communities and state during this Public Health Pandemic.

1. Alternative Strategies, effective March 18, 2020:

The majority of employees will be working via tele-commute and will not report to their official work site. It is expected that the people supported by Prime Care Coordination will continue to receive quality service delivery. Employees are expected to meet their responsibilities to our members and all expectations of their position.

2. As per the recent guidance, all in-person meetings and visits relating to assessments, life plans, monthly/quarterly visits, and other face-to-face contact will be conducted via a secure video-conferencing or teleconferencing method.
3. Exceptions will be made to individuals supported when there is an emergency requiring the direct support and presence of a Care Manager.
4. Prime Care Coordination is currently working on identifying and prioritizing high risk individuals; additional strategies may be put into place, as needed, to ensure they are receiving increased monitoring and any other supports they may need.
5. We will be engaging in communication with the Willowbrook Consumer Advisory Board regarding alternative strategies for Class Members during this time and will increase contact (through non in-person means outlined above) with Willowbrook Class Members and/or caregivers.
6. Other operational meetings, trainings, supervision with Prime Care staff will be conducted through secure video/telephone conferencing.
7. Prime Care Leadership will continue to work with providers and local and state offices.

The above strategies will be in effect until further notice. Prime Care Coordination leadership will continue to monitor and adhere to recommended actions that become available during the coming weeks and determine if strategies should be continued or modified. The commitment to our mission and the health and safety of over 8000 individuals/families we support, including our workforce, providers and the communities is our paramount concern and responsibility.

Please feel free to reach out to your Care Manager with any questions. Stay safe and be well!

Sincerely,

Lindsay Gozzi-Theobald, COO on behalf of Tracy Boff, Executive Director, Prime Care Coordination