

## **Preparation & Containment Protocols for COVID-19 as well as other communicable diseases**

Family Promise is dedicated to providing safe environments for guest families, volunteers, and staff.

### **The Facts**

Coronavirus is a familiar respiratory illness. It was first identified in the mid-1960s. The strain being tracked now (March 2020), COVID-19 (Corona Virus), is a new strain named for its link to the first reported cases, in 2019, in Wuhan, China. It can be spread person-to-person, similar to influenza and other respiratory illnesses. As of right now, there is significant concern internationally, as the majority of reported cases are in people who traveled directly to the region, but experts are preparing for the possibility of widespread activity, in the U.S. There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. Any infected person can seek medical treatment for symptom relief. There is also no vaccine to protect against it. Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Severe complications from this virus have included pneumonia in both lungs. The elderly and those with compromised immune systems are considered to be at greater risk. The CDC does not have any current scientific documentation surrounding pregnant women and children. But, generally speaking, pregnancy causes immunologic and physiologic changes which may make women more susceptible to viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19. Additionally, there have been a limited number of cases in children, presenting with cold-like symptoms and at least one case with gastrointestinal symptoms.

### **Prevention**

Person-to-person infection spreads in the following ways:

- Between people in close contact with each other (within 6ft)
- Via respiratory droplets spread during coughing or sneezing, these can also land on surfaces and be infect someone that way.

Family Promise of Bergen County will adopt as standard practice for Staff, Guests, and Volunteers to the Family Center what the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends for preventing the spread of COVID-19:

- Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based sanitizer (contains at least 65% alcohol), if soap and water are not available.
- Perform routine cleaning on all frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, doorknobs and countertops. Follow instructions provided on disinfecting products and supply proper cleaning materials.
- Provide tissues throughout a living or workspace, to cover the mouth and nose when coughing/sneezing
- Posting information from the CDC's coughing and sneezing etiquette website, as well as the clean hands website, to encourage containing droplets spread by coughing/sneezing.
- Encourage employees/volunteers with symptoms of a respiratory illness to stay home until they are free of a fever for at least 24 hours, without fever-reducing medication.

Family Promise will promote regular hand washing among guests, staff and volunteers by providing access to hand soap in the bathrooms and kitchen and bleach wipes at the entryways and show children proper hand washing techniques that include firm rubbing of hands with soap for at least 30 seconds before thorough rinsing. Signs will be posted reminding everyone to wash their hands frequently, and especially children coming back to the Family Center after school or day care.

Family Promise will make sure that communal surfaces are cleaned and disinfected daily. This includes doorknobs, appliance handles, computer keyboards, light switches, tables, remote controls, etc.

### **Containment**

Anyone with symptoms will be isolated from other individuals at the Family Center and appropriate precautions to contain the spread of the illness using the prevention strategies (see above) will be taken. While there is no known anti-viral treatment for COVID-19 the individual can seek medical attention to confirm diagnosis and treat symptoms. Individuals will not return to the Host Site until they are medically cleared by a doctor and written confirmation of this is received.

If a **guest** develops fever, cough, sore throat and/or other flu-like symptoms such as body aches, they will be isolated from other guests. If symptoms continue, they will be advised to visit a doctor.

If a **staff member** develops flu-like symptoms, they will be asked to stay home and see a doctor if symptoms continue or worsen.

If a **volunteer** exhibits flu-like symptoms, they will be excused from service that day and encouraged to seek medical attention. They will not be allowed to return to their duties until they have been without symptoms for a minimum of 14 days.

### **Communication**

Family Promise will encourage all Host Sites to adopt and implement similar prevention strategies at their sites including requiring that any ill volunteer stay at home. The Executive Director should be immediately informed if symptoms arise in any of the guests or if they learn that that a guest has potentially been exposed by a volunteer.

Family Promise will visibly post and verbally reinforce hygiene best practices. Family Promise will stay connected to local public health authorities and our other contacts for advisories for our community.

### **General Prevention Recommendations that Family Promise will follow:**

Encourage all persons within the shelter to cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue. Throw all tissues in the trash after use. Maintain good hand hygiene by washing with running water and soap, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.

Make the means for appropriate hand cleansing readily available within the shelter, including food preparation and dining areas. Ideal means for hand cleansing include running water, soap, and paper towels. Paper towels and waste baskets will be made available.

Clean all common areas within the Family Center routinely and immediately, when visibly soiled, with the cleaning agents normally used in these areas.