



Recommended Protective Actions in Residential and Non-Residential Settings Licensed by DHS

ENHANCED TESTING AND USE OF PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

8/4/2021

This document outlines recommendations for additional testing and protective actions that settings licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) can take in light of the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. This guidance is intended to supplement strategies outlined for DHS-licensed settings at [Community Settings: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/communities.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/communities.html).

DHS-licensed settings that this guidance applies to includes: adult foster care, chemical dependency residential treatment facilities, children's residential facilities, children's residential facilities with a mental health certification and/or chemical dependency certification, community residential settings, intensive residential treatment services, intensive treatment in foster care, mental health residential treatment facilities, psychiatric residential treatment facilities, adult day centers and day service facilities.

The Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 has become the dominant strain circulating in the U.S. This variant spreads more easily and quickly than the early SARS-CoV-2 virus, leading to more cases of COVID-19, especially among unvaccinated and otherwise vulnerable people. People served in DHS-licensed settings are at particular risk because they live or receive day supports in group environments that put them in close proximity to others and may have conditions that make them medically vulnerable.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that adults with disabilities are three times more likely than adults without disabilities to have serious underlying medical conditions. People with disabilities are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 if they are older adults or have certain underlying medical conditions. CDC provides more information on high-risk conditions at [CDC: Different Groups of People \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html). The Delta variant is also spreading rapidly among unvaccinated people. Settings that provide services to children who are ineligible for vaccine should use enhanced precautions to reduce spread of the disease.

Encourage vaccination

Vaccination is the most important protective measure we have against all variants of COVID-19 and we urge eligible people to get vaccinated. Although we are seeing some cases of COVID-19 in vaccinated people, most

RECOMMENDED PROTECTIVE ACTIONS IN RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS LICENSED BY DHS

cases are occurring in people who are unvaccinated. Fully vaccinated people are less likely to be infected and vaccine also greatly reduces the chance of hospitalization and death.

For more information on COVID-19 vaccines, refer to [About COVID-19 Vaccine \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/basics.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/basics.html).

Testing recommendations

Following notification of an exposure, MDH recommends all staff and persons who receive services in DHS-licensed settings seek testing immediately and again three to seven days after exposure, regardless of vaccination status.

- Fully vaccinated people do not need to quarantine while awaiting their test results if they are not showing symptoms. Unvaccinated people should quarantine after having close contact with someone with COVID-19. Close contact means being less than 6 feet from a known case for 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period.

As testing resources and capabilities allow, MDH also recommends DHS residential settings consider enhanced testing strategies, as outlined in [Recommendations for Enhanced SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Long-term Care Facilities \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/lcenhanced.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/lcenhanced.pdf).

Recommendations for source control and personal protective equipment

MDH recommends that all staff in DHS-licensed settings, vaccinated and unvaccinated, wear a well-fitting face mask throughout their shift when indoors or in a crowded setting outdoors, according to the [COVID-19 PPE Grid for Congregate Care Settings \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/surge/crisis/ppegrid.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/surge/crisis/ppegrid.pdf). Staff should wear a face mask during meetings and during breaks unless actively eating or drinking. Physical distancing, limiting the number of staff in a break area, or eating lunch outside are other recommended actions administrators of DHS-licensed settings should consider to reduce the risk of transmission.

Masking for source control is particularly important if staff are working with or in frequent contact with someone who is at high risk for severe illness (e.g., more than 65 years old or has comorbidities), or who is unvaccinated.

MDH also recommends all DHS-licensed settings direct care staff to wear eye protection according to [COVID-19 Universal Eye Protection Risk Assessment for Long-term Care and Assisted Living-type Settings \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/eyeppe.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/eyeppe.pdf).

- In preparation for implementing eye protection for all staff, administrators may find the following video helpful: [CDC Project First Line Resources Episode 10: Why is Eye Protection Recommended for COVID-19 \(www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline/videos/EP10-EYE-LowRes-New.mp4\)](http://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline/videos/EP10-EYE-LowRes-New.mp4).

People who live in or receive services in DHS settings should continue to follow [Recommendations for Wearing Masks \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html).

Report all cases of confirmed COVID-19

DHS-licensed settings should use the following tool to report cases of COVID-19: [Submitting Clinical Information On Long Term Care and Adult Day COVID-19 Cases and Reporting Discrepant Laboratory Results \(redcap-c19.web.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=H8MT9TTNCD\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=H8MT9TTNCD).

For more information on reporting cases of COVID-19, please refer to [Reporting COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 Infections \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/report.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/report.html).

 **Wear a mask.**  **Wash your hands.**  **Stay 6 feet from others.**  **Stay home if you feel sick.**



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