



3/11/2020 -- COVID-19 Update from [Amy C. Sousa, CEO](#)

The information about and impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is evolving constantly. As a result, The Guild is continuously assessing and reviewing the latest information to support the individuals in our care.

As you are aware, Governor Baker declared a state of emergency yesterday due to the Coronavirus. Our understanding is that MA Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Secretary Sudders will be issuing guidance and recommendations on congregate settings today and MassHealth will be issuing guidance on additional flexibilities by the end of this week.

In addition, The Guild leadership and healthcare workers are participating in numerous webinars on prevention and preparation for COVID-19 to help organize our work. We will provide you with regular updates, including the information below regarding The Guild's current practices in the areas of prevention, social distancing, and preparedness for possible infection.

Prevention

We are continuing to support the practice of universal precautions as previously documented:

- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze, using a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water frequently and use hand sanitizer.
- If you have a fever or feel sick, stay home and call your healthcare provider.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Get the flu vaccine – it is not too late!



In addition to universal precautions, The Guild has scheduled extra deep-cleans of main building weekly until the virus abates. (The building is already cleaned daily under usual circumstances.) All houses and classrooms are being supplied with additional cleaning and sanitation products, which are being used regularly throughout the day. Activities of daily living (ADLs) are being given extra staff support as well, particularly in the areas of personal hygiene education and routines.

Social Distancing

The Guild is applying “social distancing” measures as recommended by public health officials in order to slow down the spread of the disease. Specifically, The Guild is implementing the following:

Community Engagement (“CE”) Activities

The Guild’s community engagement activities are vital components of individuals’ leisure and educational programming. The Guild will make every effort to ensure that individuals are engaged in stimulating, educational, and appropriate activities; however, some types of CE activities will be curtailed reasonably to protect the health and safety of the individuals served.

At this point, The Guild is limiting community experiences in the following ways:

- Until further notice, The Guild will cancel attendance to large, indoor events, i.e. professional sporting events, Disney on Ice, etc. Per public health guidelines, we will stay in consistent communication with partner providers regarding attendance at smaller events as safety and health allows.
- Some regularly-scheduled community engagement activities will be put on hold until further notice and replaced with alternative programming. For example, Launch, Sky Zone, and pot luck events are cancelled until further notice.
- The Guild’s medical providers have identified individuals with medically complex/fragile profiles who may need to have alternative programming with even more limited exposure to crowded events.



- If parents/guardians have concerns about community engagement activities for their individual and/or if they want to identify any additional restrictions, please contact the following people:
- [Mustapha Abdulai](#), Director of Adult Residential Programs,
- [Mark Boilard](#), Director Youth Residential Programs, or
- [Annie Willis](#), Chief Education Officer.
- If an individual identifies activities that s/he wants to forgo due to concerns of COVID-19, house managers and/or education managers will work with them to accommodate their concerns and make a plan for an alternative activity.

Visitation to and from The Guild

Because The Guild deeply values individuals' social and family connections, we take "social distancing" procedures with extreme caution. As such, we are not recommending that families stop visitations with individuals and students. Rather, The Guild is recommending that families modify their interactions with individuals in ways that help to prevent the spread of illness to others, including the following:

- Until further notice, The Guild will host IEP, ISP, and Caring Together meetings via conference call.
- The Guild's maintenance staff will be tasked to residences and school areas only in cases of health and safety. Cosmetic repairs will be postponed until the risk of infection has abated.
- Family visits to Guild residences should be limited to immediate family members and guardians only. Those visits should be pre-scheduled for limited periods of time. Visitors with any symptoms of illness will not be allowed to enter Guild facilities. All visitors must take reasonable precautions against the spread of infection.
- When appropriate, consider using electronic communication options with your individual.
- Some Guild sites may have additional prohibitions on site visits as dictated by public health officials and/or the medical diagnoses of the individuals being served in that location.



- The Guild asks that family members who are experiencing illness symptoms, i.e. cough, fever or shortness of breath, to postpone visits home.
- Individuals who visit home will be required to engage in precautionary measures upon return to Guild residences, including bathing and washing clothing.
- Due to the increased need for staffing at the residences and the risk of infection in vehicles, The Guild must suspend most transportation for home visits.

In the Event of COVID-19 Infection

If it has been determined by medical personnel that isolation is appropriate then any staff or student with an infectious disease will be restricted from school until s/he is no longer contagious. The Department of Public Health (DPH) will be contacted. DPH guidelines will be followed. Unless otherwise advised by DPH, the following measures will be instituted by The Guild:

- Infectious Diseases will be reported by the Nurse to the local health department as required by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter III, Section 6.
- Isolation procedures will be established by The Guild's Health Services Department and physician consultant in accordance with the DPH Standards as needed for individual situations.
- The Guild's Health Services Department or designee will notify all parents, guardians, and referring agencies of the reported communicable disease within the agency.
- Residential students with an infectious disease will be sent home when possible. They may return to school when the infection period is over, with written confirmation from a licensed medical practitioner.
- For residential adults or If a residential student cannot be sent home, appropriate isolation procedures will be instituted for the duration of the infectious period.
- The individual will not be allowed to attend classes or work. S/he must have as little contact with the others as possible.



- Meals should be placed on paper plates and disposable utensils used. Use of a private bathroom will be provided as needed depending on the type and nature of the illness in conjunction with the recommendations of DPH.
- Staff will wear protective equipment as indicated and should wash hands very carefully after attending to this individual.

As a parent, daughter, and human services' provider, I share your concerns about the spread of COVID-19. Please know that The Guild is keeping abreast of all information channels to stay ahead of any and all prevention and mitigation strategies available. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out with your questions, concerns, and ideas.

Amy C. Sousa
Chief Executive Officer