

## An Update by Our Administrator

4/16/20

Thomas Allen continues to stay abreast of the steps that we need to actively take to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the people we serve and their support teams, our employees and the community. We hope you are finding that we are able to provide the same level of quality services while adhering to the social distancing requirements.

I have found that amidst the turmoil and fast-paced information exchange that our employees have remained steadfast, patient and take special care in the provision of support to those we serve. Many employees are working from home and others continue to provide direct service to those in TA homes and those that live independently in the community. Behind the scenes, I am impressed with the competency of our maintenance, financial, employee relations, training, marketing, nursing, administrative support, information technology and our director leadership teams.

Thomas Allen has taken the following actions:

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Sanitizing Supplies:** We continue to reach out to all sources to ensure that we obtain and work towards the obtainment of needed items to keep our employees and those we serve safe. We thank our friends and neighbors for the donation of masks; these are invaluable!

**Masks:** Upon the guidance of MN Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control, all staff working with those we serve and those in office environments are required to wear a mask.

**Medica Coverage/Health Insurance Coverage for COVID-19:** For those employees on Thomas Allen's health insurance coverage, Medica has implemented coverage changes related to care for COVID-19. These changes went into effect March 1, 2020 and will extend through May 31, 2020. The changes include full coverage for in-network hospital, testing, and telehealth services.

**Background Checks/Fingerprinting:** Starting 4/6/20, background checks through DHS are being conducted without the fingerprinting component. Fingerprints will be obtained for all new hires once the fingerprinting stations are open again.

**Financial Stability:** With many individuals complying with the Stay at Home order by taking residence within their family homes, we are taking the necessary steps to work towards financial stability. This includes modifying schedules so that staff are providing coverage during day time hours due to day program closings. It also includes staff providing services in modified ways. In addition, we are working with Lead Agencies to amend service agreements to include day time hours. The state has increased Housing Support funds to address increased purchase of PPE, sanitizer and food delivery, to name a few. We are working with our financial partners to obtain additional resources to address staffing needs.

**Employment/Income Stability:** We have had to reduce staffing in some areas due to the need for social distancing. As staff hours decrease, these staff are requested to provide services for homes/divisions in need. We implemented a temporary benefit of supplementing an employee's wages should they not be able to work their scheduled hours due to COVID-19. We are working with those we serve who have been furloughed in applying for unemployment benefits.

**Training:** Training for new and current staff continues to be provided. We have developed an on-line training portal along with enhancing our skills to provide virtual training.

**Employee Health:** We are currently asking all employees to self-monitor their health before coming to an office or home setting. We ask that they not have a cough, shortness of breath or fever (taking their temperature before coming to work to ensure body temperature is below 100.4). Employees are to communicate with their supervisor via phone if they have any of these symptoms.

**Visitors:** Our no visitor policy to the homes and offices remains unchanged.

We continuously remain in close coordination with local health officials, county and Department of Human Service agents to ensure we have up-to-date information. Our management staff is meeting regularly and will revise protocol as necessary to address this evolving situation. As a united workforce, Thomas Allen is working towards meeting the day-to-day challenges with the utmost consideration of those we serve, our employees, our Lead Agencies, and the community.

Thank you for supporting Thomas Allen and those we serve. We are committed to keeping you informed and taking the steps necessary to provide a safe working and living environment.

[Previous update - 3/30/20](#)