



March 11, 2020

Dear individuals, families, staff, and care providers:

This letter is to inform you of the steps Berkshire County Arc is taking regarding 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). BCArc is instituting a number of practices and protocols to minimize the risk to individuals. We take seriously the possibility of Coronavirus infection and exposure, as the elderly and individuals with respiratory concerns or compromised immune systems are at a higher risk of complications from the virus.

**In the event that there is a confirmed case at any BCArc program that you/your family member/the individual you support takes part in, you will be informed immediately.**

How can you help?

- Do not send individuals to work or day program if they have a fever over 100 degrees.
- Do not send individuals to work or program with symptoms such as runny nose, cough, or shortness of breath.
- In the event that an individual that attends any day or work program is confirmed to have the Coronavirus, or to have had first-hand exposure to someone with confirmed Coronavirus, please notify the program and *also notify* Caroline Eldred, BCArc's Director of Nursing, at (413)499-4241, x235.

What is BCArc doing to protect the individuals we serve?

- All staff are trained in universal precautions.
- As proper hand hygiene is the best defense against Coronavirus
  - Individuals are being supported in proper handwashing
  - BCArc will be providing a refresher training to all staff in the basics of effective handwashing
- All sites have sufficient germicidal cleaning supplies

- Any individual with a fever of 100 or higher will not be allowed to attend a BCARC day program
- Staff have been instructed to avoid casual contact (handshakes, high-fives, hugs, etc.)

Please carefully monitor your family members/the individuals that you serve and be mindful of any symptoms they develop. If the individual develops any of the above symptoms, please contact the Primary Care Provider for guidance. Individuals who are sent home from programs with fever (temperature over 100 degrees) may not return to work placements or day program until they have been fever-free for 48 hours without medication. BCARC may require a doctor's note for individuals to return to their programs.

Thank you for your help in protecting the health and safety of all of the individuals we serve.

*For up-to-date information on the Coronavirus in general and in our community, you can access Berkshire Health Systems "Coronavirus Information Kiosk" at <https://www.berkshirehealthsystems.org/coronavirus> or call the BHS toll-free hotline at 855-BMC-LINK (855-262-5465)*