



March 17, 2020

Dear BCArc Family and Friends,

These are extraordinary times in our lives. We are all working fast—and trying to be smart—as we respond to the changes we face daily. I want to note that we are blessed with an enormously committed staff who continue to put the health and safety of the individuals we serve ahead of all else.

Unlike other businesses and agencies, Berkshire County Arc cannot close its doors. Our mission is to support people and enrich their lives. At the moment, that mission has shifted to keep people safe and healthy from COVID-19. We are doing all we can to limit the health risks of our 1,000 individuals.

As you may know, unfortunately we have had to close our day programs until further notice. The number of people in one place forced this decision. This includes the closing of Crossroads, the Social Development Center, the Center for Development, Nu-Opps, Northview and Transitions.

Every residential home is taking precautionary measures to stay safe. Besides immediate family, no one can visit a house except for medical purposes—even they are required to use universal precautions. All visitors are screened with a series of questions to ensure their health has not been compromised.

Individuals are not to take trips to restaurants, stores, BCArc offices, or any indoor public spaces. A staff member will shop for groceries alone. We recommend brief outdoor recreation with open spaces. We are doing our best to limit the number of people in any one spot, without compromising our operations. We are taking precautions with meeting and trainings, using technology—video and phone—to gather remotely.

We will continue to monitor local, regional, statewide and national updates. We are in continuous contact with the relevant state agencies—including emergency preparedness organizations—and fellow Berkshire human service providers. We have ensured adequate supplies for providing care, including gloves, medical cups, masks, and more. We are concerned about these supplies for the long-term, and are pursuing every avenue going forward with our partners.

We have a communications chain based on our emergency plan and are providing new training and ongoing communications to our staff as new developments occur. We are also adhering to state guidance and advisories when appropriate to our services.

These are taxing times. We are all on the frontlines of this fight against the virus. Working together—looking after one another—is the best remedy toward limiting the spread of the virus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth W. Singer".

Kenneth W. Singer
President & CEO