



COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

Effective 06/07/2021

Purpose

Epic Enterprise is committed to providing a safe and healthy place for the individuals we serve, our employees and visitors. To ensure that, we have developed the following Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers and employees are all responsible for implementation of this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our licensed site which will require full cooperation from all employees. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health within our workplace and communities.

This plan will be a living document, to be updated as often as relevant information regarding the pandemic is released. This plan will adhere to Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on COVID-19. In addition, it will adhere to requirements from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). The COVID-19 Preparedness plan will be posted onsite, readily accessible to employees and persons served and a copy will be made available to each person receiving services, their legal representative, if any, residential providers, if any, and their case manager.

The DHS Commissioner has temporarily modified Minnesota Statutes, section 245D.04, subdivision 2 pertaining to a person's service-related rights by adding a new clause: A person's service-related rights include the right to make an informed choice about whether to receive services in the community or to "stay-at-home" and not receive day services in the licensed facility or in the community during the peacetime emergency to minimize their exposure to COVID-19. This right exists even if the person does not meet the definition of an "at-risk person" under Emergency Executive Order 20-55, paragraph 2. Accordingly, Epic has updated its Rights of Persons Served Policy and will document the communication of this update along with each person's choice to stay at home or receive day services during the peacetime emergency. (This plan serves as notification that Epic considers this right a temporary addition to our Service Recipient Rights policy.)

Epic staff communicate regularly with the people served about their interest in receiving in-person or other services during the pandemic. Epic is committed to designing an environment that mitigates risk to the highest degree in which we are able. Epic is also committed to honor the individual choices made by the people in our programs.

COVID-19 Protocols – Overview

If you are sick or test positive for COVID-19 you are required to stay home. You are not permitted to access the Epic building, vehicle, provide or receive direct services.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include Fever or feeling feverish, new cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, loss of taste or smell.

- **If you have symptoms of COVID-19:**
 - If a lab test shows you do not have COVID-19 but have symptoms, stay home until your symptoms are better and you do not have a fever.
 - Without testing, stay home until all three of these things are true:
 - You feel better. Your cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms are better.
and
 - It has been 10 days since you first felt sick.
and
 - You have had no fever for at least 24 hours, without using medicine that lowers fevers.

- **If you test positive for COVID-19:**
 - Stay home and away from others.
 - If you test positive but do not have symptoms, you must still stay home and away from others for 10 days.
 - If you have been fully vaccinated and test positive for COVID-19, you still need to stay home and away from others.

- **If you are in close contact** (less than 6 feet from someone for 15 minutes or more throughout a 24-hour period) with someone who tests positive to COVID-19
 - Monitor for symptoms and follow the most current MDH guidance on staying home (quarantine) at that time.
 - People who are fully vaccinated (two weeks after receiving a second shot of a two-dose vaccine, or two weeks after the single-dose vaccine) who display no symptoms do not need to quarantine.
 - Unvaccinated people must stay home for 14 days from the date of last exposure.

Screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 - employees:

Employees have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. At the start of their shift each day, staff will be required to complete a Daily Health Screening.

- Daily Health Screening includes.
 - Do you feel sick, or do you have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19?
 - Fever or feeling feverish, new cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, loss of taste or smell.

- If you have had close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 notify your supervisor or the Program Director immediately for further guidance.
- A station has been set up at Epic for employees to complete these steps.
- Employees who are working directly with service recipients but are not entering the building should complete the health screening at home, and email/text it to their supervisor.
- Employees who answer “yes” to the screening questions or has a measured temperature above 100°F should notify their supervisor and leave the building.
- All employees are to inform their supervisor of a return from international travel. A return to work will be based on current CDC guidelines.

Epic encourages employees to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. Epic employees may be eligible for Paid Time Off and other benefits.

Screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 – persons served:

Persons served, guardians and residential providers have been informed of and encouraged to monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Each person entering an Epic vehicle or community site shall have completed a Daily Health Screening prior to gaining access to the Epic vehicle or community site each day.

- Daily Health Screening includes.
 - Do you feel sick, or do you have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19?
 - Fever or feeling feverish, new cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, loss of taste or smell.
 - If you have had close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 notify the Program Director immediately for further guidance.
- If picked up by an Epic staff, the staff should record the persons served answers on a written log or in Cashe.
- If staff meet the persons served at a community location, the Program Director will determine the appropriate procedures related to these safety measures.
- Persons served who answer “yes” to the screening questions or has a measured temperature above 100°F should stay home. Staff should notify a Program Coordinator/Program Director.

Staff and people receiving services must comply with any community business’ safety plan.

Individual Consideration for Resuming services

Persons served will be evaluated individually, and if determined to be safe, may be allowed to resume services with the approval of the Executive Leadership Team.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has identified that people with disabilities service-related rights include the right to make an informed choice about whether to return to work, receive services in the community or to “stay-at-home” and not receive day services in the licensed facility or in the community. Discussions with the person, their legal representative, and case manager should take place to help identify questions and concerns.

Notification of Exposure to COVID-19

Staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 while at work will immediately report to their supervisor and leave as soon as possible. If providing direct supports to clients requiring supervision, a plan will be developed quickly to provide needed supports while allowing staff person to leave as soon as possible.

Epic staff will monitor persons served for signs of illness. If a person becomes ill during the day and requires supervision, supervision must be provided until a caretaker arrives to bring the person home. The staff should contact a Program Coordinator/Program Director. When in community locations and the staff is supporting other people, the staff and Epic Program Coordinator/Program Director will develop a plan for the person to remain isolated as much as possible and for transportation to be arranged to bring them home.

Employees or persons receiving services who test positive for COVID-19 or have come in close contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19 must notify a Program Coordinator/Program Director immediately. The Executive Leadership Team will be responsible to gain an understanding of potential locations and individuals the affected person had been in contact. Epic will share with employees and others, information regarding any possible exposure to persons with COVID-19, while still adhering to Data Privacy Guidelines. Epic will notify legal representatives, case managers, and residential providers when a person served has been potentially exposed. **The Minnesota Department of Health (651-201-5414) will be contacted for further guidance.** Epic will notify anyone who was in close contact to a case of COVID-19 in the facility and direct them to monitor for symptoms and will follow the most current MDH guidance on staying home (quarantine) at that time.

Transportation Services

- Drivers will wear masks while driving and assisting people on/off the vehicles. Masks may be temporarily removed while driving if visibility is impacted due to fogged eyeglasses.
- A face shield is recommended for staff to use for eye protection.
- Riders will wear face masks while using Epic transportation. Any deviation from this protocol needs prior approval from a Program Director.
- Riders should be spaced out as much as possible in a vehicle.
- For ambulatory passengers (if needed), drivers may exit the vehicle, standing outside the door of the vehicle and from a socially distanced position be prepared to assist a person who may lose their balance entering or exiting the vehicle. Staff should encourage as much independence as possible with vehicle entry/exit including fastening seatbelts.
- When possible, the driver will improve ventilation by opening windows or setting the air ventilation/conditioning on non-recirculation mode.
- Vehicles and keys will be sanitized by the driver at the end of each day (at the minimum). Surfaces to be cleaned and disinfected include: door handles, arm rests, seats, seatbelt buckles, all types of control knobs and handles, windows as needed, etc.

- Individuals who are transported by public transportation or taxi will abide by their protocol. Riders on public transportation are encouraged to:
 - Wear a cloth face covering
 - Refrain from touching your face with unwashed hands
 - Look for social distancing instructions on the vehicle and consider skipping a row of seats between other riders, if possible
 - Consider packing hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, sanitizing wipes, facial tissue, and an extra cloth face covering to ensure adequate supplies are available during travel
 - Avoid touching frequently touched surfaces such as touchscreens, ticket machines, handrails, buttons, and benches as much as possible
 - Use hand sanitizer or wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds if hands are visibly soiled, when arriving at destination

Protecting Yourself and Others

Epic recommends and strongly encourages everyone to get the COVID-19 vaccine when able to do so. Vaccination is one of the best things you can do to prevent getting or spreading COVID-19.

Following are recommendations on distancing and hygiene from the Minnesota Department of Health:

If you are not fully vaccinated:

- Stay 6 feet from other people whenever possible.
- Wear a mask.

Vaccinated or not vaccinated, MDH strongly recommends that you:

- Wash your hands often, with soap and water. Wash for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Throw used tissues in the trash. Wash your hands.
- Work from home if possible
- Clean and then disinfect surfaces.

Staff will provide supports to people receiving services to follow hand and face hygiene as much as possible.

Masks

- Drivers and riders will wear face masks while using Epic transportation or riding in an employee's vehicle.
- When providing support to people in community locations, unvaccinated staff and individuals served must wear masks.
 - When working outside for long periods of time, procedures may be developed to determine if and when masks may be removed. Prior approval from the Program Director is required.

- Vaccinated and unvaccinated staff and individuals served will wear masks when required by community businesses and facilities.
 - Even if a business does not require masks, unvaccinated staff will continue to wear masks at all times when providing direct staffing.
 - If a business does not require masks for anyone (including those not vaccinated), persons served who are unvaccinated may refrain from wearing masks when working without an Epic job coach. When receiving direct job coach support, unvaccinated persons served must wear a mask.
- When working with people receiving direct services in the Epic building, unvaccinated employees and individuals served are required to wear a mask or face covering unless it impedes clear communication.
- Vaccinated staff and persons served may still choose to wear masks at anytime for further protection.
 - Guardians should notify their Epic contact person if they want their person to continue to wear a mask even if vaccinated.
- Face masks should always be worn by people with compromised immune systems, regardless of vaccination status.
- Any change in these mask protocols must be approved by the Program Director (including consideration of the following information from MDH).

Best Practices for Masks: Considerations for People with Disabilities and Special Health Needs (Minnesota Department of Health):

- Background: The use of masks may be a barrier for some people with disabilities, particularly for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, because masks eliminate lip reading as an effective form of communication... We also know that some people with other challenges, such as sensory issues, might find it difficult to wear a facemask.
- In certain circumstances, the use of masks may not be reasonable and accommodations can be made. Accommodations include safe alternatives such as social distancing. Acknowledgement, flexibility, and support for people with disabilities and special health needs is critical during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- General Recommendations: For those who are unable to wear a mask, maintain a safe social distance of 6 feet whenever possible. Face shields may be an alternative for people who cannot wear masks due to medical or other conditions.
- For deaf or hard of hearing people:
 - People can remove their mask when asked to do so by someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, if they are able to maintain a safe social distance of 6 feet.
 - Using a face shield (clear plastic shield that covers the forehead, extends below the chin, and wraps around the sides of the face) instead of a facemask, protects the wearer and allows visibility of facial expressions and lip movements for speech perception.
 - Using speech-to-text apps, or writing notes on paper or mobile devices, may be effective.
 - Clear masks are an option.
- Some individuals receiving services may require further training and ongoing supports by Epic staff to accept wearing of masks. People receiving supports from Epic who are unable to wear masks need prior approval from a Program Director.

Remote Services

Services will be delivered by remote technology whenever appropriate according to Minnesota Department of Human Service guidance. The delivery of remote support must be real-time, two-way communication with the person (i.e. phone calls or use of other technology media currently available to the person.) Remote services may be provided to people who live in a single-family home or apartment and to people who live in provider-controlled residential settings (e.g. corporate adult foster care, family foster care, customized living). Those living in an ICF-DD are not eligible for these services. The provision of services through remote support must be performed within the scope of the covered services; the needs identified in the person's support plan; the amount of service authorized. Waivered remote services available include:

- Day Support Services (previously called Day Training and Habilitation)
- Employment Development
- Employment Exploration
- Employment Supports

More specific information about remote support service functions can be found at:

<https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/news-initiatives-reports-workgroups/long-term-services-and-supports/news/remote-functions.jsp>

Services funded through Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind may also be delivered by remote technology whenever appropriate.

Specific Procedures for Use of Epic Building

Effective May 28, 2021, the following licensing changes were identified:

- Return to regular days and hours of operation as approved by DHS Licensing prior to COVID-19
- Participants do not have to be strictly maintained in cohorts.
- Strict social distancing is not required.
- Operate at full capacity.
- Eliminating mandatory quarantines from the program regardless of exposure or vaccine status. In the case of a potential exposure to COVID-19, the program must follow the most current guidance from MDH regarding exposures and quarantines.

Epic may continue to keep people in separate activity groups and encourage social distancing to reduce the likelihood of the spread of COVID-19.

- If a person becomes ill during the day and requires supervision, supervision must be provided in an isolated area away from others until a caretaker arrives to bring the person home. The Epic building has a designated quarantine area, away from other people, for an individual to use until they are able to leave the building. A Program Coordinator/Program Director should be notified immediately.
- There may be circumstances when Epic will temporarily close our day support services until services can be delivered safely. The following are considerations that may be used to determine if services can be delivered safely:

- COVID-19 exposure or infection in multiple cohorts
- Inability to maintain minimum staffing ratios
- Non-participation by service recipients due to COVID-19 exposure or infection

Building Care

When providing in-person programming, the building is cleaned daily by a professional cleaning service. Staff will be disinfecting high-touch areas throughout the service day, including tables and other surfaces, door handles, light switches, handles of restroom sinks/stall doors/toilets, phones, etc. Types of disinfectant products used will comply with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

If a staff or person served is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will follow the CDC guidelines below:

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before being cleaned and disinfected.
- Wear a mask and gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.
- If more than 24 hours since person who was sick or diagnosed was in the facility, cleaning is enough but Epic may choose to disinfect depending on conditions. If more than 3 days, no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is required.
- Continue routine cleaning and disinfecting.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Condition Systems (HVAC)

Epic's HVAC system fans will run during occupied times (beginning 2-hours prior to occupancy) to promote air circulation throughout the building. Air is filtered by HVAC system air filters. The filters are replaced at least every 3 months or more frequently, if necessary. The percentage of outside air brought into our building through HVAC systems will be increased to promote fresh air circulation while continuing to keep dust particles and allergens to a minimum.

Communication and Training:

This Preparedness Plan will be communicated to all staff and persons served by:

- Sending the plan and answering competency questions through Epic's online staff training each time the plan is revised. Additional training will be provided as needed.
- Sending the plan via email to each person served (or their residence) and to their support team members each time it is revised.
- Posting the current plan at Epic.
- Posting the current plan on our website.

When appropriate, staff will explain in plain language the parts of this plan that are relevant to people receiving services. Supervisors will monitor how effective the plan has been implemented, by observation, discussion and communicating with employees and other stakeholders. The plan will be revised and updated accordingly to maximize its effectiveness.