



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
**Developmental Disabilities Administration**  
PO Box 45310, Olympia, WA 98504-5310

August 21, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Staff and Client Testing

**Dear DDA Community Residential Services and Support Providers,**

This communication is being sent to you to partner with your agency in our plan to move forward with the goal of offering COVID-19 testing to all your staff and clients you support. We are asking for your assistance in point prevalence testing to identify any client or staff persons with asymptomatic COVID-19 infections. The testing would be available for both staff and clients who are either receiving or providing DDA contracted residential services. Residential service types include supported living, group training homes, group homes, and companion homes, contracted with DDA. Similar to other long term care settings, some individuals who receive DDA residential services are at risk for more severe outcomes if they become infected with COVID-19. Gaining an understanding of baseline rates of asymptomatic infection will help prevention and control efforts to limit transmission. The information will advise recommendations for ongoing testing of clients and staff and inform agencies on how to perform testing in the event a staff member or client develops symptoms, or in response to an outbreak in a program.

We believe it is extremely important that contracted residential program staff become familiar with testing of, both clients and staff to limit the spread of COVID-19. We recognize that testing may be challenging for some providers. Because of this we encourage participation but do not require it at this time. We do urge every provider to follow these recommendations and to make their best efforts to complete testing by September 30, 2020.

Agencies that have tested all clients, and staff supporting those clients on or after July 1, are exempt from this request.

The Department of Health and the Department of Social and Health Services recommends the following:

**By Sept. 30, 2020 –Agencies should:**

- Offer COVID-19 tests to all clients and administer/assist with testing of all consenting clients;
- Offer COVID-19 tests to all staff, inform them there will be no cost to them or their insurance, encourage compliance, and administer tests to all willing staff. A “staff member” is any employee, contractor, volunteer, or person who provides direct, indirect, or administrative support, health care, social, administrative, clerical, dietary, environmental, or any other kind of services for the agency.

- Ask staff and clients to share their test results of the test, both positive and negative, with the agency.
- Comply with all applicable state and federal laws when offering tests to, requiring tests of, administering tests to clients and staff, including, but not limited to, any laws governing client's health care decision-making such as Clients Rights per 2SHB 1651
- Submit timely, proper specimen to an authorized laboratory; along with information the lab requires to perform the tests, report test results;
- Immediately report positive test results for client and staff to DSHS using:
  - The 24/7 Hotline: 1-800-562-6078 or,
  - Online reporting: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/residential-care-services/residential-care-services-online-incident-reporting> or,
  - Email: [CRU@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:CRU@dshs.wa.gov) or Fax: 360-725-2644);
- Staff not scheduled to work on the testing day do not need to be called in or tested because this is a point in time survey.

There are two options that will be used for this testing.

**1. Everlywell (Preferred Option for individuals who have an e-mail account)**

- The first is from a company called [Everlywell At Home Lab Testing](#).
- Individuals who test using test kits provided by this agency will need to have an individual email.
- A practitioner order is not needed since Everlywell kit contains this order.
- E-mail address is needed to register online for the test and to look up the results. These kits use self-collected nasal swabs that are sent to Everlywell laboratory for processing.
- The turnaround time to receive results once the specimens are received at the lab is 48 hours.
- The provider order and shipping costs are included in this test.
- If Everlywell tests are being used they will come in individual boxes with instructions as to how to use them. On the day the test is collected it must be dropped off at a UPS or FedEx location or if there are multiple samples a UPS pick up can be arranged. Insurance information does not need to be submitted for tests from Everlywell.

**2. Community Based Testing Site (CBTS)**

- The second option is that staff and clients who do not have a personal email address.
- This method will be tested using specimen collection kits sent from the Department of Health.
- If a client is unable to collect their own specimen a healthcare professional e.g. RN, LPN or Nurse delegated staff, is needed to collect the samples and prepare them for shipping.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE), used by the health care professional obtaining the nasal swabs will also be sent to your agency. Your agency can call DSHS-DDA Nursing Service Unit manager (Doris Barret-- [doris.barret@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:doris.barret@dshs.wa.gov)) to request the PPE needed to administer the test.
- DDA will contact your agency to get information on the number of clients and staff who may use this testing method and share it with DOH.
- The Community Based Testing Site (CBTS) customer service team at the Department of Health, will call each agency directly to start this process. They will confirm with you the current number of *staff and clients* at the agency. This will help determine how many specimen collection kits each agency needs. They will round up to account for gaps.
- The CBTS team will email you your assigned laboratory and instructions for sending specimens, following your call. This includes how to register online and complete the requisition forms, and

how to properly prepare and package specimens with the material in your kits. Specimens not properly labeled, sealed, and packaged cannot be processed.

- PPE supplies will arrive in separate shipments; PPE from DSHS, and testing supplies from DOH. Test kits and PPE will be sent to the agency's regional/local administrative offices. The supplies and specimen shipping costs, in the form of a pre-printed and prepaid shipping label will be covered by DOH.
- If the tests being used are from the Department of Health, insurance information should be collected and submitted for client tests covered by Medicare or Medicaid. Insurance information is not needed for staff or clients covered by any other insurance. The State of Washington will cover the laboratory fees for all staff and for clients who are uninsured or not covered by Medicaid or Medicare.
- If the agency does not receive enough test kits to provide tests to consenting clients and staff, should email [doh-cbts@doh.wa.gov](mailto:doh-cbts@doh.wa.gov) about ordering more supplies.
- If the agency does not receive enough PPE to provide tests to consenting clients and staff, you can contact Doris Barret email: [doris.barret@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:doris.barret@dshs.wa.gov) to request more supplies

A future communication will include a link to a Frequently Asked Questions page and information for an upcoming webinar that will explain the process in more detail.

Sincerely,

*Saif Hakim*

Saif Hakim  
Chief  
Office of Nursing, Residential and Employment and Day  
Developmental Disabilities Administration

cc: Doris Barret, Nursing Services Unit Manager  
Shannon Manion, Director of the Division of Field Services  
Lorna Morris, Regional Administrator – Region 1  
Lauren Bertagna, Regional Administrator – Region 2  
Kristine Pederson, Regional Administrator – Region 3