



HELPING RESTORE ABILITY
A Non Profit Serving Texans with Disabilities



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CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE PLAN

As of March 18, 2020

HELPING RESTORE ABILITY MISSION:

1. Helping Restore Ability envisions a future in which no Texan with a disability lacks the resources they need to live a full and independent life.
2. Helping Restore Ability is THE resource for Texans with disabilities and their families to find the care they need as we are able to.

Regardless of our response level as outlined in the following plan, HRA will continue to provide services to our clients.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Coronavirus is a respiratory disease first detected in China that has now been detected in almost 90 locations internationally, including in the United States and Texas. The virus has been named SARS-CoV-2 and the disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” and abbreviated to COVID-19.

NOTE: This information is valid as of March 18, 2020. During this virus outbreak, you can best stay informed of changes and developments by visiting the CDC Website and subscribing to their daily E-Newsletter. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 INFECTION?

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 have had mild-to-severe respiratory illness. Symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath which may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

HOW DOES THE VIRUS SPREAD?

The usual spread for COVID-19 is from close person-to-person contact through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing. It may also be spread through airborne transmission, when tiny droplets remain in the air even after the person with the virus leaves the area. Thus, contaminated surfaces may be another, less common, route of transmission. It should be noted that common disinfectants kill COVID-19 on surfaces.

ARE SOME PEOPLE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO GETTING COVID-19?

Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions or immunocompromised systems seem to be at a higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness.

HOW IS COVID-19 DIAGNOSED AND TREATED?

Diagnosis may be difficult with only a physical exam because mild cases of COVID-19 may appear like the flu or a bad cold. A laboratory test is the only way to confirm the diagnosis and currently, the tests are in short supply. As of now, there is not a vaccine available.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I BECOME SICK?

Over the phone, contact your health care provider; **call ahead before going to see a doctor or emergency room.** Tell them your symptoms and travel history (or close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, if applicable). Always wear a mask when leaving your home when you are experiencing symptoms.

- Have you traveled internationally within the last 3 months?
- Have you come into close contact with someone who has a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis within 14 days?
- Do you have a fever greater than 100.4 degrees OR symptoms of lower respiratory illness such as cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing?

If you answer YES, to any of the questions your health care provider should advise next steps which may include testing and quarantine for 14 days.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PLAN AHEAD?

We need to plan that usual services may be disrupted. These include services provided by hospitals and other health care facilities, schools, restaurants, government offices and post offices. Large public events may be cancelled, and air travel curtailed.

What is known about the spread of COVID-19 within the United States is changing daily. We need to plan for the potential of high absenteeism. These guidelines are not designed to create widespread panic, but rather reassurance that we have thought through our response. These guidelines are an attempt to place proactive plans in place for HRA, recognizing we need to be flexible and constantly monitoring the situation utilizing local, state and national resources. It is important that we communicate only accurate and up-to-date information. Rumors and misinformation will only contribute to confusion and unnecessary fear. The Executive Team will need to address any misinformation among staff and stay informed about COVID-19 in our community.

Expect modifications and changes to this plan.

Helping Restore Ability will continue to monitor and work with the CDC, the Texas Department of State Health Services and Tarrant County Public Health Department regarding our response. As new information becomes available Helping Restore Ability will ensure staff have the most up-to-date response plan.

LEVEL 4: GREEN FOR PREVENTION AND MONITORING RESPONSE

WHEN IS THIS RESPONSE LEVEL INDICATED?

Generally, the Level 4 Green Response Plan will remain in place if there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 from community spread, not related to foreign travel, in the DFW area.

WHAT WILL OUR COORDINATED RESPONSE BE AT THIS LEVEL?

At this response level, we should all be practicing and following basic prevention measures:

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds throughout the day. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if soap and water aren't available.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or flexed elbow, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid shaking hands entirely to reduce the risk of spreading infection.
- Face masks are not recommended for use by healthy people to protect against infection.
- All frequently touched surfaces such as workstations, telephones, countertops, tabletops, bathroom fixtures and doorknobs should be routinely cleaned using a disinfectant spray or wipe. Each employee is responsible for cleaning their own workstation, meeting spaces, break room spaces, doorknobs, tablets and phone(s). The cleaning contractor will be directed to increase sanitizers on common surfaces, door handles, common areas.
- Stay home when you are ill. If a staff member, volunteer/intern or contracted employee comes to work with a cough and a fever over 100.4 degrees, they will be asked to go home.
- If any staff, volunteer/intern or contracted employee has recently traveled outside the United States, and they have symptoms, they will be asked to self-quarantine (per the CDC guidelines) and monitor their symptoms before returning to work. The individual should be free from a fever for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medicine such as acetaminophen, before returning to work.
- The CEO will reach out to partner agencies to evaluate their planned response.

LEVEL 3: BLUE FOR HEIGHTENED MONITORING AND RESPONSE

We will move to the next level, should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed in Tarrant County.

WHAT WILL OUR COORDINATED RESPONSE BE AT THIS LEVEL?

At this response level, we should continue to practice all the basic prevention measures outlined in the Level 4 Green Response. The following additional precautions will be put in place:

- All staff including caregivers, should reconsider travel to the area where a case of COVID-19 has been confirmed from community spread. Our travel policy communicated March 12, 2020, remains in effect.
- The PAS care coordinator will monitor the caregiver P.T.O. and their plans to travel outside the North Texas area.
- The caregivers traveling outside the North Texas area may be instructed to remain quarantined based on the places visited, possible exposure and client status.
- All the employee cases related to travel will be examined on a case by case basis.
- Internship related questions will be addressed with the respective professors. The alternative methods like work from home and internship completion deadline flexibility will be considered.
- The door handle cleaning policies should be in effect. The A team staff team will be advised to clean all the door handles after a specific interval of the time (recommended every 1 to 2 hours).
- The intake process will include questions of symptoms and exposure of any family members. When scheduling a client for services, these additional screening questions will need to be completed prior to the clients onboarding:
 - Have you or your family members traveled internationally within the last 3 months?
 - If yes, confirm if travel occurred to countries where transmission is known to be occurring: China, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, or Iran.
 - Clients - If yes to one of the countries where transmission is known, we should not schedule them to be seen. Staff should consult with a supervisor on how best to proceed. The COVID-19 clearance should be confirmed before processing.
 - Staff: - If yes to one of the countries where transmission is known, then staff should consult with a supervisor on how best to proceed. The COVID-19 clearance should be confirmed before processing.
 - Have you or your family member come into close contact with someone who has a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis within 14 days?
 - Clients - If yes, we should not schedule them to be seen. Staff should consult with a supervisor on how best to proceed.
 - Staff – If yes, contact manager and do not report to work.

- Do you or your family member have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher OR symptoms of lower respiratory illness such as cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing?
 - If clients have a fever, we should not schedule them to be seen. Staff should consult with a supervisor on how best to proceed.
 - Staff if you have a fever, you should contact your manager and not report to work.
- At the time a client or caregiver arrives at Helping Restore Ability questions above should be restated and confirmed. If the answer is YES, they should be asked to return home with their appointment rescheduled once their illness has resolved. All surfaces the individual(s) came in contact with should be immediately cleaned using a disinfectant spray or wipe and wearing protective gloves.
 - Keep in mind it is allergy season and individuals may have a headache, runny nose, cough, congestion, watery eyes, etc. If an individual is displaying one of these symptoms, they should still come for their appointment or report to work. If the individual is displaying two or more of these symptoms, they should consult with their healthcare provider and manager.
 - Helping Restore Ability staff are asked to consult with their healthcare provider regarding any medical question(s) they might have.
- The Executive Team should begin to plan for the possibility of canceling special events, meetings and trainings, keeping in mind factors such as crowd density, contact between participants and whether attendees may be in a high-risk group.
- All staff should begin to consider what work functions can be performed at home and have necessary resources and materials to complete those tasks on hand and ready to access should we move to Level 2.

LEVEL 2: YELLOW RESPONSE FOR HIGH RISK RESPONSE

WHEN IS THIS RESPONSE LEVEL INDICATED?

We will move to this level, should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed in Tarrant County and school districts decide to close. We will also move to this level, should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed among a family member of our staff, interns, employees, client or caregiver who visited the HRA office.

WHAT WILL OUR COORDINATED RESPONSE BE AT THIS LEVEL?

Again, all measures outlined in Level 4 and Level 3 remain in effect, with the additional precautions put in place:

- The flexible work policy and the work from home policy will be used to the extent deemed necessary by the Executive Team.
- Staff should use the Employee Assistance Plan (contact information provided in your benefits package.) to help with stress reduction and managing fear and anxiety. Current statistics indicate more deaths are caused every year from influenza than are anticipated or projected for COVID-19. Those at greatest risk are the elderly and those with underlying health conditions. Keep current on the facts and avoid rumors and misinformation.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

LEVEL 1: RED RESPONSE FOR HIGH RISK RESPONSE

WHEN IS THIS RESPONSE LEVEL INDICATED?

We will move to this level, should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed among a member of our staff, volunteers or interns, or employees.

WHAT WILL OUR COORDINATED RESPONSE BE AT THIS LEVEL?

- At this level, involved staff will self-quarantine at home for 14 days and monitor themselves for any symptoms. If you have a fever or any kind of respiratory difficulty such as coughing or shortness of breath, call your doctor or a health care provider and explain your symptoms over the phone before going to the doctor's office, urgent care facility or emergency room. Your health care provider will direct you as to next steps. At this point, the local health department will be involved, and we need to follow their protocols and guidelines to reduce spread. The CDC also provides guidelines if you are sick.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

- Cases where face-to-face interaction is necessary will be postponed to ensure the safety of staff and clients. Staff will be encouraged to utilize Zoom and other methods of technology (Microsoft Teams, Google Duo) for necessary meetings.
- Only those who work at the HRA offices will be allowed entrance into the building, with the exception of those personnel who are granted entrance through contractual requirements, licensure regulations, or local, state or federal officials. Delivery of packages and equipment will still be allowed, though delivery personnel will be required to maintain social separation of at least 6 feet while in the lobby area. All others will be told to call and speak to our staff via telephone, email, fax, or to put any items being dropped off into the HRA outdoor mailbox.
- Again, this is a unique and rapidly developing situation. If you are not ill, employees will utilize remote access to work remotely. If we move to this level and staff are quarantined at home, staff will not be required to use accrued PTO for hours not worked.
- The Executive Team will arrange for the cleaning service to perform a 'deep clean' to Helping Restore Ability weekly to disinfect all surfaces until such time as the public health pandemic is declared over. The agency will work closely with the local health department to ensure appropriate protocols and guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting are followed and refer to guidelines available through the CDC.
- Marketing will prepare a statement for the public to be posted on our website and social media pages outlining our current response plan throughout the process.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

If anyone outside of Helping Restore Ability asks you questions regarding our response plan or status within our agency, please direct all correspondence to our Director of Research, Girish Shelke – **gshelke@hratexas.org**. This will assist us in providing consistent messaging as well as preventing any miscommunication from occurring. Helping Restore Ability will continue to monitor and work with the CDC and state and county Departments of Health and Human Services regarding our response. As new information becomes available, Helping Restore Ability will ensure staff have the most up-to-date response plan. ***

