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Dear Day Services Family Members, Residential Providers, and Advocates,

Over this past weekend we received new guidance from OPWDD regarding required actions in relation to New York State's COVID micro-cluster or "hot spot" strategy. Specifically, we are now required to observe the following in OPWDD certified facilities, which includes, ICFs, Supervised IRAs, Supportive IRAs, and Day Habilitation Programs.

1. **Hot Spot Notification:** OPWDD will notify us when any of our certified programs are in a red, orange or yellow zone—or when there are any changes to a previous notification. Currently, we have 4 day programs in yellow zones.
2. **Weekly COVID Testing in Hot Spots:** Provider agencies such as HeartShare must demonstrate our efforts to have all staff and individuals living, attending program or working in one of the hot spot zones (red, orange or yellow) to be tested for COVID on a weekly basis until the location is no longer considered a hot spot. Testing is strongly recommended, and HeartShare must demonstrate its efforts to inform everyone and attempt to ensure that everyone gets tested. Therefore, we will be requiring our staff working in hot spots to have a weekly test, and we will be asking your cooperation in having your loved one tested. If there is any way we can assist or support you in the effort, please let us know. All positive results must be reported to both the NYC Department of Health and OPWDD.
3. **Site-Based Day Services, Respite and Group Comm Hab Suspension in Red and Orange Zones:** OPWDD is requiring agencies to suspend their site-based day and prevocational programs temporarily if in a red or orange zone.
4. **Community-Based Group and Individual Services in Red and Orange Zones:** Community-based group and individual services (day hab without walls, community prevocational services, group supported employment, non-site-based respite, and community habilitation) are either suspended or operating at reduced capacity if in a red or orange zone (see *OPWDD Interim COVID-19 Guidance: Designated Cluster Mitigation*).

These important changes affect many lives, and we appreciate your continued cooperation in working with us as we implement these new requirements and try our absolute best to keep your loved one safe and well. We will be communicating again as any new guidance emerges. Stay in touch with your day program coordinator to learn whether the program your family member attends is affected. Thank you and stay safe,

*Linda*

Linda Tempel  
Executive Director, DD Services

*Evelyn*

Evelyn Alvarez  
Associate Executive Director, DD Services

