



4/1/21

Dear Team Members, Self-Advocates and Families:

Please see Advocates' revised COVID-19 Safety Measures below. The following resources have also been updated and are available on our website: COVID-19 vaccination locations, Employee Voluntary Vaccination Policy, Employee COVID-19 Return to Work Policy. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information or if you have any questions. We are here to help!

<http://www.advocatesincorporated.org/information-resources/>

### **COVID-19 Safety Measures - Effective 4/1/2021 - revisions are highlighted**

Community Habilitation (Self-Hired and Agency Supported), Self-Hired Respite,  
Broker and Fiscal Intermediary Services

Definitions:

Fully Vaccinated – At least 2 weeks from the date of the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. **For employees to be considered “fully vaccinated”, proof of vaccination must be on file with Advocates Human Resources** (Image of employee's vaccination card can be submitted to HR via [hrsecure@advocatesincorporated.org](mailto:hrsecure@advocatesincorporated.org) or via postal mail).

Direct Exposure – Person has been directly exposed to someone else who has tested positive within the last 10 days.

### Health Screenings

All employees must complete a health screening prior to entering any work location (including the home of person served, Advocates office, etc.).

- Mentors must complete health screening upon logging into eVero prior to beginning a direct shift.
- All guests and employees must complete a health screening at reception desk prior to entering office.
- A health screening must be completed by all parties prior to any in-person meeting.

### Face Coverings for Employees

Per OPWDD regulations at this time, face covering requirements are the same for fully vaccinated employees and unvaccinated employees during service provision both at home and in the community.

- Employees are provided with cloth face coverings and/or disposable masks.

- Employees must wear face coverings while in direct contact/providing services.
- Face coverings must be worn for the entire time that the employee is in close contact (6 feet or less) with the person receiving services or others.
- Email [supplies@advocatesincorporated.org](mailto:supplies@advocatesincorporated.org) to request additional PPE.

### Face Coverings for People We Support

All New Yorkers must wear a face mask or face covering in public when social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart) is not possible, unless a face covering is not medically tolerated. (Executive Order 202.17)

People we support are encouraged to wear a face covering during Community Habilitation service time if they can medically tolerate wearing one. If the person receiving services cannot medically tolerate wearing a face covering:

- Mentor must support the person to remain 6 feet from other community members at all times.
- Mentor may not provide services in community locations where social distancing cannot be practiced.

### Guidance on Community & Group Activities During Community Habilitation Services

#### **If one or more members of the group have NOT been fully vaccinated:**

It is essential to temporarily minimize group activities to limit the risk of exposure and safeguard the health of our employees and the people we support.

- All community activities must allow for social distancing.
- Advocates continues to recommend that services are provided 1:1.
- **Advocates prohibits employees from supporting people to gather in groups of more than 4 people total (ex. No more than 2 people receiving services and 2 Mentors).**
- Low risk, outdoor activities are encouraged whenever possible.

If a community location/organization is hosting an event and they are taking responsibility for ensuring that the environment is set up for current state and local regulations to be followed (ex. a community class with Mentor and person served sitting 1:1 at a table socially distanced from instructor and other class members), the Mentor must still take responsibility for ensuring that all Advocates Community Hab. Safety Measures can be followed in that setting prior to attending.

#### **If all members of the group have been fully vaccinated:**

**Mentors may support people to gather in groups of up to 6 people total (no more than 3 people receiving services and 3 Mentors), at the request of the people receiving services.**

If the NY State Hot Spot Zone/Cluster Action Initiative is reinstated: In Red, Orange or Yellow Cluster Areas/Hot Spot Zones: Employees may only provide services 1:1 and may not support people to gather in groups of any size. **This applies to those who are fully vaccinated and those who are not vaccinated.**

To safeguard the people we support, our employees and those residing in the employee's home, services may not be provided at a Mentor's home.

#### Transportation During Community Habilitation Services

**Per OPWDD regulations at this time, transportation guidance is the same for fully vaccinated employees and unvaccinated employees during service provision.**

- Employees will wear a face covering at all times while providing transportation.
- If the person receiving services is able to medically tolerate wearing a face covering, employees will request that they wear a face covering while in the vehicle.
- The person receiving services will be encouraged to sit in the back seat on the passenger side of the vehicle to maintain the greatest distance possible.
- Where appropriate and safe, windows should be rolled down to permit air flow.
- Prior to providing services vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected.

#### NY State Travel Advisory

**Effective April 1, 2021**

**Per NY State Department of Health:**

**Domestic travelers will no longer be required to quarantine after entering New York from another U.S. State or U.S. Territory starting April 1st.** While no longer required, the NYS Department of Health still recommends quarantine after domestic travel as an added precaution. Mandatory quarantine remains in effect for international travelers. All travelers must continue to fill out the [Traveler Health Form](#). Individuals should continue strict adherence to all safety guidelines to stop the spread - wearing masks, socially distancing and avoiding gatherings.

#### Advocates instructions to employees on working out of state:

- **Prior to providing services out of state, employees must email [hr@advocatesincorporated.org](mailto:hr@advocatesincorporated.org) to request permission to work out of state.** OPWDD requires that the individual have a statement in their Life Plan regarding their desire to use their services out of state before their Mentor can provide support out of state.
- **Employees are prohibited from working out of state for more than 10 consecutive days.**

**Advocates Employees must immediately notify Human Resources if they have a direct exposure to someone who is positive for COVID-19 or if the employee is pending a COVID-19 test result.**

Contact information:

**Advocates COVID-19 hotline/Incident reporting cell: (315) 401-1293**

**Human Resources email [HR@advocatesincorporated.org](mailto:HR@advocatesincorporated.org)**

**Training and Support Specialists: (315) 469-9931 or email [TSS@advocatesincorporated.org](mailto:TSS@advocatesincorporated.org)**