

# WORKER SAFETY DURING HOME VISITS

Precautionary principle: any novel virus may be transmitted by contact, droplet, and airborne methods. These types of viruses may be transmitted within 6 feet by coughing, sneezing, laughing, and talking.

## General advice to protect self, clients, and others

- Wash hands often with soap and water (20-30 seconds, tops of thumbs, between fingers, under fingernails, and fingertips, which are sometimes overlooked)
- Use personal protective equipment when indicated
- Stay home when sick and alert your employer
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and personally throw away immediately; or if no tissues are available, cough or sneeze into your shirt sleeve
- Frequently clean touched surfaces and objects
- Take care of yourself: rest, drink fluids, eat healthy foods, and manage stress (e.g. exercise and meditation)

## Enhancing Client Safety

- Recognize clients may be worried, scared, confused and are often alone
- Emphasize the need to stay home
- If health care service is needed, call first for instructions
- Call 911 if one experiences any difficulty in breathing
- If available within the community, call 311 as a helpful alternative
- Emphasize the need to be physically isolated but not socially or emotionally
  - Recommend options to stay connected with others when not sharing the same space

## Home visit Screening

- Call PRIOR TO VISIT to assess for the following:
  - Have you or someone else been exposed?
    - Have you had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID 19 illness
  - Have you or someone else had symptoms in the last 14 days?
    - Fever, Cough, and Shortness of Breath (SOB)
- When you arrive at the client's door, assess again (or the first time if not able to make phone contact)
  - Assess the previous 2 questions for the client and anyone in the home or accompanying them on the visit if at a different setting
  - Remain a distance of 6 feet when screening
  - If no one at the home is ill, proceed with the visit
- If positive for exposure and/or symptoms
  - CANCEL visit and make a plan for follow up
    - Encourage the client to call their Primary Care Provider (PCP) for further assessment
    - If client has no PCP, provide information on locations to receive care

- Inform them: DO NOT GO TO URGENT CARE OR ER until instructed to
- Notify your supervisor

### **Tips for Home Visit**

- If possible, set up a video interview or interview by phone while client is viewed through a window or interview from the front door entrance without entering the home
- Bring only items necessary for visit to the home
- Avoid placing belongings on tabletops and counters unless disinfected before setting down
- Store personal items securely in your vehicle prior to arriving at the location
- Greet family verbally, avoid physical contact such as handshakes.
- If possible, maintain the recommended 6 feet distance from others
  - Avoid doorknobs, have family members open door or use a barrier such as a paper towel or napkin

<b>FOLLOW YOUR AGENCY'S POLICY REGARDING WHEN TO WEAR FACE MASKS</b>
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### **Putting on the Mask**

- Wash your hands with soap & water for at least 20 seconds. Dry your hands with a clean paper towel & immediately dispose of the paper towel.
- Check the mask for any defects such as a tear or missing tie or ear loop. Dispose of all that are defective.
- Ensure that the exterior (usually yellow or blue) side of the mask is facing out, away from your face.
- Place the mask on your face with the blue side facing out and the stiff, bendable edge at the top, over your nose.
- Once the mask is in place, use your index finger & thumb to pinch the bendable top edge of the mask around the bridge of your nose.
- If the mask has ear loops, put one loop around each ear.
- If the mask has ties, pick up the mask by the ties and tie the upper ties behind your head with a bow.
- If the mask has a lower tie, then once the mask is fitted to the bridge of your nose, tie the lower ties behind your head with a bow.
- Ensure that the mask is completely secure. Ensure that it covers your nose and mouth so that the bottom edge is under your chin.
- Wash your hands.

### **Removing the Mask**

- Wash your hands before removing the mask.
- Do not touch the inside of the mask (the part over nose and mouth). It may be contaminated from your breathing, coughing or sneezing.
- Untie or remove the ear loops and remove the mask by the straps.

- Dispose of the mask in a garbage receptacle.
  - If reuse of the mask is necessary, store your mask in a paper bag, not plastic
  - Mark paper bag as “Front”
  - Place the outside of the mask (side of mask away from mouth) into the paper bag facing the side marked “Front” on the bag

### **Cleaning and Sanitizing During and between visits**

- Wash hands at arrival, at departure, and as needed
- Use supplies brought in your toolkit
- Use hand sanitizer
- Clean and Sanitize the following items between home visits and/or as needed
  - Cell phone
  - Pen (dedicated to home visits only)
  - Name badge
  - Clipboard
  - Any additional supplies

#### **Sanitary Tool Kit**

- Ziploc bag that holds materials
- Hand soap
- Paper towels (Fold several into the bag, do not take the entire roll inside)
- Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)
- Disinfectant wipes
- Paper bags

### **Keeping Your Vehicle Virus Free**

- Wipe your materials with disinfectant prior to entering the vehicle
- Disinfect the door handle after each visit
- Utilize a barrier where you are placing your supplies
  - For example: Place garbage bag on the vehicle floor that will be discarded daily
- Use an EPA Approved Disinfectant or a mixture of 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

### **Keeping your loved ones safe**

*To be prudent until more scientific evidence is known ...*

- Wear washable clothing
- Remove clothing in garage or in foyer
- Place clothes in a laundry basket with a liner, a garbage bag, or directly into washing machine
  - Utilize the highest possible water temperature
- Shower immediately
- Limit contact with others within your household until the above steps are completed