



# HEALTH + SAFETY

## — UPDATE —

### OPTIONS Family of Services update regarding COVID-19: 8-20-21

To our Friends and Family:

We are approaching 18 months of life with COVID-19. We have shown great strength in working together as a country, state, and community to do our part in slowing the spread of COVID-19. We would like to continue to share the steps OPTIONS Family of Services has taken to address COVID-19 and continues to take as the virus and our community response evolves. We are committed to the health and safety of all the individuals we support and our employees. As you are aware, COVID-19 is a virus that spreads easily from person to person. Signs and symptoms include, fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. We now know that symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and many people infected show a wide range of these symptoms ranging from mild to severe and some people are asymptomatic.

As vaccinations slow down, we are seeing an increase in cases especially due to variants. Santa Barbara County has reissued a mask mandate for all persons regardless of vaccination status to wear masks indoors and this is also strongly encouraged in SLO County. The State of California has issued orders regarding testing and vaccines in hopes that cases will begin to decrease. It is essential to continue to follow state guidance for COVID-19 safety, which currently includes wearing masks and social distancing in all public places and continuing to avoid large gatherings. For current guidance, please visit, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>.

Here at OPTIONS we continue to focus on preparedness and protection and are closely following the information provided by a number of local, state, and federal health agencies to guide us. It is our goal to keep all of our staff and persons served as safe and healthy as possible. We have received a few updates and clarifications from the California State Public Health Officer Orders from 7/26/2021 and 8/5/2021.

Beginning 8/9/21, with full compliance required by 8/23/21, all staff who have not submitted proof of complete COVID vaccination must wear a surgical mask while working with persons served in any congregate setting. This includes the 5 ICFs (Morro Bay, SLO, Atascadero, School and Orcutt), Crisis homes, day programs, TL, Tunnell and Alvin. In addition, N95s are available upon request to all unvaccinated staff or those staff who are not yet fully vaccinated. If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID in a facility, all staff must wear an N95 until the local Public Health Department has cleared the facility.

Beginning as soon as we receive testing kits from the State of California, staff who are unvaccinated or who are not fully vaccinated (i.e. they have not completed their series or have not completed the full 2 week waiting time after completing the vaccination series) must undergo surveillance testing. Staff working at Tunnell, TL, Alvin, Sonata, Legato or either of the day programs must be tested one time weekly. Staff working at one of the 5 ICFs must be tested twice weekly. Staff who have submitted proof of vaccination who are two or more weeks past their final dose are considered fully vaccinated, and will not need to be tested unless there is a confirmed case in a facility. Relief staff who are unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated must have a negative test within 48 hours of their shift.

On August 5, 2021, California State Public Health Officer announced a new order regarding COVID-19 vaccinations for healthcare workers. This was an extension of the orders from July 26, 2021 and for our purposes applies only to staff working in an ICF (at least for now). The order states that all workers in an ICF must be vaccinated or have on file a medical or religious exemption. Those who have an exemption on file will continue to undergo testing twice weekly after September 30, 2021.

Overall, our persons served are now able to have more access to the community and visitors are welcome at all programs. However, for the time being, visitors who would like to visit inside at our ICF homes, will be required to provide proof of full vaccination. Our day services partially re-opened mid-June. We continue to educate our staff and persons served on the guidelines and best practices to protect from COVID-19 transmission. We diligently monitor the COVID-19 situation on a daily basis, and will continue to do so to ensure the safety of our persons served, staff and community. We appreciate your support, patience and kindness as we navigate this challenging situation together. Thank you!

Debbie Bertrando, CEO, OPTIONS Family of Services