

Referral letter for Symptoms

May , 2020

Dear Client:

As you may know, a new type of virus is spreading in our community. The coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause flu- and cold-like symptoms, including fever, cough, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, shortness of breath, or repeated shaking with chills.

Because you have experienced COVID-19-like symptoms, we want to make sure you are seen by a doctor – both to make sure you are ok, and also to protect other people from getting sick. We have a safe, comfortable, and private room for you to go while you are waiting to see a doctor. **For your safety and the safety of others, we are not publicizing the location of the isolation site. Please do not share the location with other people.**

In general, coronaviruses spread through droplets sent into the air when people cough or sneeze. The virus can spread very easily in communities from one person to another, and through contact with surfaces that have germs on them. For this reason, medical experts are currently advising “social distancing” – staying inside and staying at least six feet away from other people to the maximum extent possible – and wearing masks/face covers when social distancing is impossible.

The information below should answer some of your questions, but the Department of Human Services (DHS) or our providers will be there 24 hours a day to help you and answer any other questions you may have.

Q: If I need to see a doctor, why don't I go to the hospital?

Residents who are experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms are being asked to monitor their symptoms and “self-quarantine” (i.e., stay inside and away from other people). **We want to make sure you, too, have a room of your own until you are feeling better and are medically cleared to return to the shelter.**

Q: How long do I need to stay?

How long you stay depends on your unique circumstances, as determined by a medical professional. Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms can discontinue isolation at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* - defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**, At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

Q: Do I need to take my belongings?

Yes, you should. It may take a couple days until you can see the doctor, and then a few more days to get your test results back (if you are tested for coronavirus). If you do have coronavirus, you will be able to stay in the private room until you are feeling better. Talk to your case manager at the shelter if you have questions or need help with your belongings.



Q: Do I need to stay in my room?

As mentioned above, coronavirus can spread easily from one person to another – including to the DHS staff, provider staff, and medical staff that are onsite to help you. To help protect them and yourself, you are required to stay in your room at all times at the isolation site.

Q: Will food be provided?

Yes, breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be delivered directly to your room.

Q: Will I have access to a phone?

Yes, each room is equipped with a phone so you can talk to your case manager or family as needed. DHS staff or provider staff will also be there 24 hours a day if you need help.

Q: What will happen after I see the doctor?

It may be a little different for each person, based on the doctor's recommendation. If the doctor wants to test you for COVID-19, it will take a few days to get your test results back (in which case, you will be able to continue to rest and relax in your room). If the test results come back positive, you will stay until you are feeling better and no longer contagious. If the test results are negative, we will help you get back to the shelter.

Q: Can I have guests?

No, you may not have guests while you are at the isolation site. The point of ensuring you have a private room right now is to minimize the chance that you accidentally get other people sick or that they accidentally make you sicker. **For your safety and the safety of others, we are not publicizing the location of the isolation site. Please do not share the location with other people.**

Q: Can I smoke on-site?

It depends. Some rooms are designated as smoking rooms and we do our best to place you in those rooms if you smoke. However, this isn't always possible and you cannot leave the room/site to purchase cigarettes. Residents can be prescribed nicotine patches to alleviate cravings, if needed.

Q: What are the best ways to protect myself and other people I care about?

- Keep as much distance between yourself and other people as possible – minimally 6 feet.
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Wash your hands (front, back, in-between fingers, under your fingernails) well and often. Wash for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Wear a mask/face cover
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Use a household cleaner or wipe to clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that people touch a lot (door knobs, phones).
- Follow recommendations from your healthcare provider.