



Referral Letter for Close Contacts

Dear Client:

You are receiving this letter because you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), a new type of virus that 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.

Out of concern for your health and wellbeing, we will be temporarily moving you to a self-quarantine site at a hotel or motel. This will protect your health, the health of your fellow shelter residents and staff and reduce the spread of the virus. Your stay at this site is temporary. You may bring items that you feel you may need during your temporary stay.

In general, coronavirus spreads 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.

We know this may be frightening to hear, but we want to put this in context. Many people who have COVID-19 never develop symptoms. Other people do develop symptoms and have felt better after a few days, and others have developed more serious symptoms and need more medical care.

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 have come into close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 positive individual 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 who have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for Covid-19 can discontinue isolation 14 days after having contact with the COVID-19-positive individual if no symptoms develop. If symptoms do develop, then individuals 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. You will be able to stay as long as you need to before being discharged by medical staff. 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 will also be there 24 hours a day if you need help.

Q: Will I be able to see a doctor?

We have medical staff on-site that you can speak with over the phone and will be monitoring you regularly. Please answer your phone when it rings. You will be able to stay until you are feeling better and no longer contagious.

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 with unwashed hands.
- Use a household cleaner or wipe to clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that people touch a lot (doorknobs, phones).
- Follow recommendations from your healthcare provider.



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