



3300 North Ridge Road, Suite 325. Ellicott City MD, 21043 | Office: 410.720.2304 Fax: 410.415.1464 | Info@TouchingAngels.com

DATE: SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2020

SUBJECT: COVID19 – NEW PROTOCOLS

GUIDANCE FOR HOME VISITING STAFF

This Guidance has been developed in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), a new disease that spreads mainly between people who are close to one another (within about 6 feet) for a prolonged period (approximately 2-3 minutes) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. It also is possible to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. There currently is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

This Guidance applies to **any staff making home visits for any purpose**. It is designed to promote the safety of both staff and the home occupants, while allowing vital home services to be delivered. **A determination should be made regarding whether the goals of the home visit can be satisfied using remote technology in place of an in-home visit before making the home visit.**

BEFORE THE HOME VISIT APPOINTMENT

Staff must conduct a daily **self-assessment**, and a **visiting home assessment within** one hour of each home visit.

Staff Self-Assessment

Staff must do a self-temperature check at least once a day. If their self-temperature reading exceeds 100.4°F [38°C], they should **NOT** conduct home visits and should report their status to their supervisor. Staff also should check with their supervisor prior to any home visit if anyone in the staff member's household:

- Has fever, cough, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea;
- Is currently sick with COVID-19 or the flu; or
- Has been told by a health provider that they should not have visitors due to illness.

Visiting Home Assessment

Staff should contact the home visit client one hour prior to the visit and ask if anyone in the household:

- Has fever, cough, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea;
- Is currently sick with COVID-19 or the flu; or

- Has been told by a health provider that they should not have visitors due to illness.

If the answer to any question is **YES**, the staff member should work with the supervisor to determine the appropriateness of visits based on the responses, current health department recommendations, and case specific circumstances. If the client or household member appears to be seriously ill, encourage the client to contact the primary care provider or, if necessary, to call 9-1-1.

At the Time of the Home Visit

Upon arrival for the visit, if the client or a client's household member appears ill, assess the situation by reviewing the questions from above (whether anyone has become ill).

- If someone other than the client in the home is ill, but the visit has been determined by the staff member and supervisor to be necessary, the ill person should be physically isolated from where the interview is taking place.
- All staff should follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, and hand hygiene throughout the duration of the visit:
 - Maintain social distancing with all persons (at least 6 feet) unless conducting a physical examination
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
 - Cover cough or sneeze with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and perform hand hygiene afterwards
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe
 - Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask, specifically:
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19
 - Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others