

MSC E-VISORY

Issue #02-13

February 1, 2013

State of New York Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
Courtney Burke, Commissioner
Distributed by: Division of Person-Centered Supports
Gerald Huber, Deputy Commissioner

The MSC E-Visory is an electronic advisory which provides pertinent and timely information about programs and services available to individuals receiving MSC. Announcements about MSC training, conferences and meetings appear regularly. **MSC Supervisors: Please share this issue with all MSC Service Coordinators and others as appropriate.** In order to receive an email notification when a new MSC E-Visory is posted, please sign up for our mailing list (listserv). Listserv information and past issues can be accessed via the OPWDD website at www.opwdd.ny.gov or via the following link: http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/service_coordination/medicaid_service_coordination/msc_e-visorries

In This Issue:

Health & Safety Alert: Flu Prevention and Precautions

OPWDD has issued a Health & Safety Alert, dated January 31, 2013. This alert, which is attached to this E-Visory, discusses Flu Prevention and Precautions such as getting a flu vaccine, taking everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs, and providing appropriate care when flu-symptoms are observed. MSCs are encouraged to share this information with individuals and families that they serve.

Training and Informational Sessions for Families

OPWDD will be hosting two upcoming Parent to Parent of New York State video conference opportunities for families. Service Coordinators are encouraged to share these opportunities with families they serve.

- February 25, 2013 (10am – 12pm): *A Guide for Families to Understanding Supports and Services Administered by OPWDD*
- March 1, 2013 (10am – 12pm): *Medicaid Service Coordination for Families - Getting the most from your child's program.*

Online registration and a complete list of OPWDD sites that will be presenting the video conferences can be accessed via the OPWDD on-line Training Catalog: <http://www3.opwdd.ny.gov/wp/index.jsp>

Fax Lines for Willowbrook Attorney's

After a lengthy interruption in services due to Hurricane Sandy, Beth Haroules (Willowbrook Attorney, New York Civil Liberties Union) and Roberta Mueller (Willowbrook Attorney, New York Lawyers for Public Interest) once again have their fax lines up and operational. Effective immediately, you may resume faxing all incident notifications (when appropriate) to the following numbers:

Beth Haroules: Fax number – (212) 607-3318 or 3329
Roberta Mueller: Fax number – (212) 244-4570

From: OPWDD-Commissioners Correspondence Unit
Sent: Thursday, January 31, 2013 3:20 PM
Subject: Health and Safety Alert: Flu Prevention and Precautions

H&SAlert.jpg

OPWDD



FLU PREVENTION AND PRECAUTIONS

The 2012-2013 influenza season started early and the flu activity level in New York State is categorized as widespread. Influenza is a contagious illness that affects the nose, throat, lungs, and other parts of the body. Influenza usually starts suddenly. Flu or flu-like illness is defined as fever of 100°F or higher with a cough or sore throat. People may also experience fatigue, body aches, headache, chills, and runny or stuffy nose; and less frequently, diarrhea and vomiting may also occur.

Flu viruses can spread quickly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by those infected with the flu. Sometimes people may become infected by touching a surface or object with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. During flu season, occurrence of acute respiratory illness in several people living together within a short timeframe should be considered influenza until proven otherwise, regardless of whether the affected residents had been vaccinated.

The flu can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Some of the people we support are at high risk of serious complications related to the flu, especially those with chronic medical conditions, those 65 years and older, and children younger than 5 years old. Regardless of risk level, all individuals should be protected from the flu by taking all precautions possible.

There are steps you can take to protect the individuals you support, yourself, and your family:

1. Get a flu vaccine as soon as possible.
 - The flu vaccine is still available, but may be harder to find now than earlier in the season. Contact more than one provider (pharmacy, doctor, health department) to find an available vaccine, if needed. Vaccination is available through a flu shot or nasal spray.
2. Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.
 - If someone we support gets sick with the flu or a flu-like illness, please refer to the *Management of Influenza in Facilities Operated and/or Certified by OPWDD 2012-2013*, available at www.opwdd.ny.gov/node/1682.
 - Employees who become ill with the flu or have flu-like symptoms should be encouraged to refrain from reporting to duty until fever-free for 24 hours.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, not a hand. This will block the spread of droplets from your mouth or nose that could contain germs. Assist people we support to do the same.
 - Emphasize appropriate hand washing with soap and water.
 - Have alcohol-based hand rub available for use when soap and water are not handy.
3. Provide appropriate care when flu-symptoms are observed.
 - In certified sites, the RN should be contacted and provide guidance for care and monitoring.
 - Contact a physician/health care provider right away if a person develops flu symptoms.
 - Be sure to follow the health care provider's recommendations and take all medications as prescribed.
 - If any of the following signs are noted, prompt referral to an emergency department should occur: trouble breathing, severe pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, dizziness/faintness, severe persistent vomiting, confusion/change in mental status, not drinking enough liquids.

For more information, please visit the following websites: www.cdc.gov/features/fluactivity/ or www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/.

HSA 2013-01