



March 25, 2020

**Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IIDs),  
Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRA), Community Residences (CR), and  
Private Schools**

**Health Advisory: Respiratory Illness in Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with  
Intellectual Disabilities, Individualized Residential Alternatives, Community Residences,  
and Private Schools in Areas of Sustained Community Transmission of COVID-19**

**Please distribute immediately to:**  
Administrators, Infection Preventionists, Medical Directors, and Nursing Directors

Recent testing of individuals and healthcare workers/clinicians/direct support professionals of ICF/IIDs, IRAs, CRs, Private Schools, nursing homes and adult care facilities in New York City, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland counties has revealed that symptoms of influenza-like illness are very often determined to be COVID-19 in facilities located in areas with sustained community transmission.

As a result, ANY febrile acute respiratory illness or clusters of acute respiratory illness (whether febrile or not) in ICF/IIDs, IRAs, CRs, and Private Schools in New York City, Long Island, Westchester County, or Rockland County should be **presumed** to be COVID-19 unless diagnostic testing reveals otherwise. Testing of individuals and healthcare workers/clinicians/direct support professionals with suspected COVID-19 is no longer necessary and should not delay implementation of additional infection control actions.

All ICF/IIDs, IRAs, CRs, and Private Schools in areas of the state with sustained community transmission of COVID-19 including New York City, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland with individuals who have febrile acute respiratory illness or with clusters of acute respiratory illness should follow the guidance from OPWDD, issued on March 25, 2020, for Staff Guidance for the Management of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Facilities or Programs Operated and/or Certified by OPWDD.

ICF/IIDs, IRAs, CRs, and Private Schools outside of these areas should continue to pursue testing of individuals and healthcare workers/clinicians/direct support professionals with suspected COVID-19 to inform control strategies.

Facilities should continue to seek advice from their Local Department of Health as needed.

General questions or comments about this advisory can be sent to Susan Prendergast, OPWDD Director of Nursing and Health Services, at [susan.b.prendergast@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:susan.b.prendergast@opwdd.ny.gov)