

MASSACHUSETTS DAY PROGRAM REOPEN APPROACH

Phase 4: New Normal

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Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services

# Introduction

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) continues to work with state, federal, and local partners on the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, and we continue to appreciate the essential role you have in responding to this evolving situation. Beginning March 22, 2021, the Commonwealth will move into Phase 4, Step 1: New Normal of the State’s reopening process. This guidance replaces and supersedes all previously issued Day Program reopening guidance issued by EOHHS.

# Please note this guidance is intended to supplement, not supplant, provisions from regulatory agencies, including the Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health, Department of Developmental Services, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and MassHealth that oversee programs and facilities included in this guidance.

# Definitions

**Activities of Daily Living (ADL)** – Fundamental personal care tasks performed daily as part of an individual’s routine self-care. ADLs include, but are not limited to, eating, toileting, dressing, bathing, transferring, and mobility/ambulation.

**Adult Day Health (ADH)** – A community-based and non-residential service that provides nursing care, supervision, and health related support services in a structured group setting to MassHealth participants who have physical, cognitive, or behavioral health impairments. The ADH service has a general goal of meeting the ADL, and/or skilled nursing therapeutic needs of MassHealth participants delivered by a MassHealth agency approved ADH provider that meets the conditions of 130 CMR 404.000.

**Brain Injury Centers** – Brain Injury Centers are community day services for brain injury survivors providing assessment, short-term skills training, support coordination, group recreation and outreach.

**Brain Injury Clubhouses** – A community-based membership organization aimed at reducing social and economic isolation for brain injury survivors.

**Community Based Day Supports (CBDS) –** This program of supports is designed to enable a participant to enrich his or her life and enjoy a full range of community activities in a community setting by providing opportunities for developing, enhancing, and maintaining competency in personal, social and community activities. The service may include career exploration, including assessment of interests through volunteer experiences or situational assessments; community experiences to support fuller participation in community life; development and support of activities of daily living and independent living skills, socialization experiences and enhancement of interpersonal skills and pursuit of personal interests and hobbies. The service is intended for participants of working age who may be on a pathway to employment, a supplemental service for participants who are employed part-time and need a structured and supervised program of services during the time that they are not working, and for participants who are of retirement age. Community based day supports provides a structured and supervised program of services and supports in a group setting which promotes socialization and peer interaction and development of habilitative skills and achieve habilitative goals.

**Coronavirus** – Any of a family (Coronaviridae) of large single-stranded RNA viruses that have a lipid envelope studded with club-shaped spike proteins, infect birds and many mammals including humans, and include the causative agents of MERS, SARS, and COVID-19.

**COVID-19** – A mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by a coronavirus (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 of the genus betacoronavirus), is transmitted chiefly by contact with infectious material (such as respiratory droplets) or with objects or surfaces contaminated by the causative virus, and is characterized especially by fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may progress to pneumonia and respiratory failure.

**Day Habilitation (DH)** – A service, for individuals with an intellectual disability (ID) or a developmental disability (DD), that is based on a day habilitation service plan that sets forth measurable goals and objectives, and prescribes an integrated program of activities and therapies necessary to reach the stated goals and objectives.

**Group** – Two or more participants who participate in the same activities at the same time and are assigned to the same staff for supervision, at the same time.

**Group Supported Employment -** Group Supported employment services consist of the ongoing supports that enable participants, for whom competitive employment at or above the minimum wage is unlikely absent the provision of supports, and who, because of their disabilities, need support to perform in a regular work setting. The outcome of the service is sustained paid employment and work experience leading to further career development and individual community employment for which the participant is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefit paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals without disabilities. Small group supported employment are services and training activities provided in regular business, industry and community settings for groups of two (2) to eight (8) workers with disabilities. Examples include mobile work crews, enclaves and other business-based workgroups employing small groups of workers with disabilities in employment in the community. Services must be provided in a manner that promotes engagement in the workplace and interaction between participants and people without disabilities including co-workers, customers, and supervisors. Group supported employment may include any combination of the following services: job-related discovery or assessment, assisting the participants to locate a job or develop a job on behalf of the participants, job analysis, training and systematic instruction, job coaching, negotiation with prospective employers, and benefits support. Typically group supported employment consists of 2-8 participants, working in the community under the supervision of a provider agency. The participants are generally considered employees of the provider agency. They are paid and receive benefits from that agency. Group supported employment includes activities needed to sustain paid work by participants including supervision and training and may include transportation if not available through another source.

**HCBS Waiver Day Service** – A service, for individuals enrolled in the ABI or MFP HCBS Waivers that provides structured, site-based, group programming that fosters community integration and ​that offers assistance with the acquisition, retention, or improvement in self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills.

**Independent Living Centers (ILCs) –** Consumer-controlled, community based, non-profit organizations that seeks to empower individuals with disabilities with the skills and the knowledge necessary to be self-sufficient and productive members of the community.

**Individual Supported Employment** – Individual supported employment services consist of ongoing supports that enable a participant, for whom competitive employment at or above the minimum wage is unlikely absent the provision of supports, and who, because of his/her disabilities, needs support to perform in a regular work setting. Individual supported employment may include assisting the participants to locate a job or develop a job on behalf of the participant. Individual supported employment is conducted in a variety of settings, particularly typical work sites where persons without disabilities are employed. Emphasis is on work in an integrated environment with the opportunity for participants to have contact with co-workers, customers, supervisors and others without disabilities. In individual supported employment the participant has a job based on his/her identified needs and interests, located in a community business. It may also include self-employment or a small business, or a home-based self-employment, or temporary services which may assist a participant in securing an individual position within a business. Individual supported employment may include job-related discovery or assessment; person-centered employment planning; job placement; job development; negotiation with prospective employers; job analysis, training and systematic instruction; job coaching in the form or regular or periodic assistance. Training and support are provided for the purpose of developing, maintaining and/or improving job skills and fostering career advancement opportunities. Job coaching at the job site is not designed to provide continuous on-going support; it is expected that as the participant develops more skill and independence the level of support will decrease and fade over time as the natural supports in the work place are established. Some ongoing intermittent job related support may be provided to assist the waiver participant to successfully maintain his/her employment situation. Natural supports are developed by the provider to help increase participation and independence of the individual within the community setting.  
  
**Participant –** Individual attending the day program including a client, consumer, or MassHealth member.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – PPE is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious illness or injury. Gloves, masks, eye protection and gowns are all examples of PPE. PPE required for program staff who are health care providers may differ from PPE required for personnel.

**Site** – The facility that is used for the day program and the outdoor space on which the facility is located.

**Program Staff** – All individuals working with participants in site-based day programs. Staff may include directors, administrators, direct care staff, nurses, therapists, peer specialists, therapeutic mentors, and other individuals employed by or volunteering at the day program who may have contact with participants.

**Public Health and Safety Standards During Phase 4: New Normal**

The [*Massachusetts Department of Public Health Guidance Reopen Approach for Health Care Providers Phase 4: New Normal*](https://www.mass.gov/doc/phase-4-reopening-guidance-massachusetts-department-of-public-health-guidance-reopen-approach-for-health-care-providers)provides the overarching guidance for all health care providers, including the day program types listed below:

* Adult Day Health
* Brain Injury Centers
* Brain Injury Clubhouses
* Community Based Day Support
* Day Habilitation
* DMH Clubhouse Services
* Independent Living Centers
* Individual Supported Employment
* Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP)
* Group Supported Employment
* HCBS Waiver Day Services
* Psychiatric Day Treatment Programs
* Psychiatric Partial Hospital Programs
* Recovery Support Centers
* Structured Outpatient Addiction Programs (SOAP)

During Phase 4, Day Programs must continue to comply with [all state COVID-19 guidance](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information). This includes but is not limited to guidance on: a) [personal protective equipment (PPE)](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-during-covid-19), b) [considerations for health care personnel after vaccination](https://www.mass.gov/doc/considerations-for-health-care-personnel-after-covid-19-vaccination/download), c) [return to work guidance for all workers](https://www.mass.gov/lists/covid-19-return-to-work-guidance), and d) [mandatory safety standards for workplaces](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-mandatory-safety-standards-for-workplaces).

In addition to these requirements, it is recommended that programs check the CDC website frequently to ensure they are implementing the most current CDC guidance and [Massachusetts guidance](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-public-health-guidance-and-directives). These standards may be amended as the Commonwealth’s COVID-19 status evolves over time and public health experts learn more about the virus. Programs must also adhere to program-specific guidance that may be issued by EOHHS agencies.

All staff, participants, and visitors must wear face coverings as consistent with [DPH guidance](https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma). However, the provider may consider waiving the requirement for face coverings for participants in special circumstances consistent with applicable guidance.

A. Personal Protective Equipment and Other Essential Supplies

During Phase 4, Step 1, Day Program providers must continue to follow [the most recent guidelines issued by DPH](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-during-covid-19) that align with the CDC as it relates to PPE usage, including any updated guidelines released subsequent to the date of this guidance. In addition, Day Program providers must:

1. Ensure that they have adequate supply of PPE and other essential supplies for the expected number and type of procedures and services that will be performed. To meet this requirement, providers may not rely on additional distribution of PPE from government emergency stockpiles.
2. Develop and implement appropriate PPE use policies for all services and settings in accordance with DPH and CDC guidelines. Day Program providers must maintain sufficient PPE volume on-hand to align with use as directed in the DPH comprehensive PPE guidance.
3. Ensure all staff have appropriate PPE, consistent with DPH guidance, to perform the service or procedure and any related care for the participant. If appropriate PPE is not available to protect the staff involved in the participant’s care, the program site should be closed until appropriate PPE is available.

B. Workforce Safety

During Phase 4, Step 1, Day Program providers must continue to:

1. Restrict the number of staff in the site to those individuals necessary to safely serve the participants. Programs must meet all staffing requirements per the authorizing entity for their specific program type.
2. Have a written protocol in place for screening all staff for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering the site.
3. Adopt policies that address staff safety and well-being.
4. Ensure staff can socially distance to the maximum extent possible.

C. Participant Safety

During Phase 4, Step 1, Day Program providers must continue to:

1. Have a process for screening participants for symptoms of or known exposure to COVID-19 prior to entering the site.
2. Have policies and procedures in place to isolate and safely dismiss participants who may develop symptoms while on site.
3. Follow [CDC guidance related to quarantine and isolation](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html).
4. Have policies addressing visitation. Non-essential visitors may be permitted so long as screening, social distancing, and PPE protocols are followed.

During Phase 4, Step 1, Day Program providers must continue to:

1. Demonstrate adherence to social distancing and relevant guidelines from DPH and CDC regarding infection control and prevention to maintain a safe environment for participants and staff. This should include, but not be limited to, adequate provisions for the storage of participant and staff belongings so that they do not touch.
2. Implement administrative and environmental controls that facilitate social distancing.
3. Minimize contact between participants through active scheduling practices, such as establishing different arrival/departure times or separate space to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
4. Have signage to emphasize public health measures (i.e., social distancing, coughing etiquette, wearing of face coverings, and hand hygiene) and provide access to hand sanitizer for participants and staff.
5. Have an established plan for thorough cleaning and disinfection of all areas as consistent with [CDC guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html).
6. Adhere to DPH guidance related to [Aerosol Generating Procedures](https://www.mass.gov/doc/update-to-defining-aerosol-generating-procedures-and-recommended-ppe/download).
7. Have a food safety plan that identifies how the provider will maintain appropriate safety and social distancing during meals including preparation and distribution of meals, safety measures for dishware and utensils, and mealtime schedule for participants. Meals shall not be served family style.
8. Prepare the materials and equipment to be used by participants to minimize sharing and promote social distancing. If programs allow participants to bring in items from home, they should carefully monitor use to ensure that these objects are not shared between participants.
9. Adhere to DPH’s [Updated Comprehensive Personal Protective Equipment](https://www.mass.gov/doc/updated-comprehensive-personal-protective-equipment/download) memo for guidance related to PPE use in order to support participants who require additional ADL support.
10. Meet all [health and safety requirements and service standards established by EOHHS Human Service Transportation](https://www.mass.gov/doc/eohhs-human-service-transportation-guidance-during-phase-4-new-normal) (HST) for any program-based transportation not provided through the EOHHS HST brokerage system.

Programs that are unable to adhere to the standards must keep their physical locations closed until the point at which they are able to successfully adhere to all standards, or otherwise deliver services in a virtual format until all requirements are met. Programs may continue to operate both virtual/remote, in-home and on-site services.

**Compliance**

Providers must maintain written policies and protocols that incorporate or exceed the standards outlined in this guidance for PPE and supplies, workforce safety, participant safety, and infection control at any and all program provider locations. Such policies, protocols, and documentation must be regularly updated and made available to the appropriate EOHHS agency upon request at any time.

The appropriate EOHHS agency will monitor and assess compliance and may require remedial action or suspension of programs warranted.