



April 8, 2020

COVID-19 Update

Dear Gateways Staff, Board, and Family Support Council:

As New Hampshire finds itself preparing for a surge in COVID-19 cases I wanted to provide you an update with the steps we are taking at Gateways and with our provider agencies. Our top priority is focused on the health and safety of our employees and clients. We continue to implement all the required CDC protocols.

Over the last few weekends, beginning March 27th, the reality of the COVID-19 and its implications to our system became real. A few of Gateways Community Services clients have tested positive, in some cases with their associated workers. These situations include three clients in two community residences, two clients living in Enhanced Family Care situations, and a one of our elders in our Choices for Independence program. Gateways has worked tirelessly over the last two weekends to procure testing and PPE equipment. Test and PPE supplies are still limited but at least in these first few cases the State of NH has been responsive.

Three of these Gateways clients impacted this past weekend were in the first group homes approved for testing by a DHHS mobile unit. It was deployed on Sunday and Monday and provided test results within 24 hours. These situations have not been easy. There has been alarm and concern, particularly among the front-line workers and affected parties.

The Department of Health and Human Services has worked very closely with us; they've worked alongside me and our impacted Providers to advocate for needed testing and supplies. Deb Scheetz, Division Director of Long-term Care Services and former Gateways employee has been especially helpful; thank you, Deb. Our providers involved are now able to offer testing, PPE equipment, and lodging if necessary. Also, over the last few weeks, many of our providers are beginning to offer Hazard pay for the next few months to their personnel, in hopes that it retains employees.

Gateways as you know is continuing most of our services. Most of our employees are remote and a majority of our client-facing services are being done through telephonic and video connection. Our Alvirne Adult Day Program is still closed, and we have limited service continuing through the Gateways Autism Center. Because of these required decisions some employees have been furloughed.

This pandemic continues to bring us operational challenges but with that said, I am incredibly proud of our Gateways team who have risen to the occasion, working tirelessly to offer continued services and supports to our clients and their families.

Wishing everyone a Happy Passover and Easter,

Sandy Pelletier
President/CEO