



## Message from the desk of Dan Burke

The month of October has started a very exciting time for Lifeworks and the celebration of the merger with our long-time partner and affiliated agency The Arc of South Norfolk. Our merger brings together The Arc's 65 years of advocacy, service to families and community partnership along with Lifeworks 30 years of dedicated residential and employment supports.

Our merger does not mean the end of The Arc but in fact the opposite. We are now one agency- Lifeworks, a chapter of The Arc. By remaining a chapter of The Arc, we continue our long-standing commitment to the Arc. We are an agency serving over 2300 people, with an average annual budget of over \$27 million dollars and we support these services with a staff of nearly 500 people. All of our services remain in their current locations, all of our staff remain providing services and working to meet the short and long-term needs of the people we support, their families and the towns we serve.

As a part of our new merger, we are launching an entire new branding of our electronic and social media communications. On Friday October 23<sup>rd</sup>, we introduced our new website- [www.lifeworksarc.org](http://www.lifeworksarc.org). We also launched our new e-mail addresses for our staff and our programs, for example I can be reached at [dburke@lifeworksarc.org](mailto:dburke@lifeworksarc.org). This site provides easy access to move from page to page, subject to subject and contains several technology tools to make it accessible- between language, visual presentation and other tools to assist people of all abilities.

The website is an exciting collaboration between all of the programs of Lifeworks. The site contains an entire new look and places an emphasis on our new mission statement- Advocacy, Empowerment, Opportunity. It also provides a great deal of information about our history, our current programs and our plans for the future. You can find information on all of our programs. The site will offer the ability to sign up and register for all of our programs and offers an easy way for all potential employees to apply for positions within our agency. A link right on the home page for the most up-to-date information about Covid-19 makes it easy to get this information. We invite you to explore our site, send us your thoughts and ideas.

As many of you have read, our state is beginning to experience an uptick in potential cases of Covid-19. We are continually planning for the potential of increases in cases. Through the late spring and summer our agency, along with many of you, have managed this virus very well. This was due to everyone taking the utmost caution and planning. We have been able to open up our day programs in a cautious, safe way and we have been able to open up our residences to the family and friends of the people who live there.

But now, I am writing to sound a measure of caution. We do not want to roll back access, we do not want to see a reduction in the day services we offer. But in order to assist in maintaining access, we need all of us to focus on the simple basic steps that have been so important since mid-March. I am asking all of you to join me in the following practices:

- 1) **Wear a mask:** – Please wear it in all indoor environments, in any situation outdoors where you are near someone or in areas of potential contact and in general, if in doubt please wear your mask.
- 2) **Social Distancing:-** Please stay 6 ft. or more away from people in conversations, in hallways, during public exchanges. If this is not possible, inside or outside, you must wear a mask.
- 3) **Please follow all protocols:** When entering a building, arriving at work or sending a person you support to another program. This includes reviewing the daily questions of possible contact with the virus and taking your temperature as well as taking the temperature of those you support.
- 4) **Please wash your hands as often as possible.:** Use warm water and soap, wash thoroughly (sing Happy Birthday twice) and dry your hands.
- 5) **Please use Hand sanitizer:** Use thoroughly throughout your day.
- 6) **Use PPE:** If you are providing personal assistance to a person whom you support, use PPE as outlined.
- 7) **Please be cautious:** If you do not feel well, if a person we support does not feel well, be safe and stay home. Consult with a program nurse or your PCP. Get tested if you have symptoms and if you think you were potentially exposed to someone, contact one of our program nurses or your PCP for further instructions.
- 8) **Community Awareness:** Please be conscious of following these guidelines when you are away from work, when socializing and gathering with friends. In order to protect ourselves, we all need to be conscious of how our choices and actions can put others we support and work with at risk.
- 9) **Testing-** Lifeworks is following the guidance and requirements of DPH and EOHHS in Massachusetts by conducting Covid-19 testing on a monthly basis for all of our staff who work in residential programs. This includes support staff such as maintenance, nursing, temp. staffing agencies and others.

In closing, we know that discussion of a spike or increase in Covid-19 scares and concerns people. Please know that since March, we have had an active and educated Agency Taskforce working on this issue and taking all preventive measures possible. This group will continue to meet as well. Our staff will be guided by our nursing departments, who will be working in conjunction with local Boards of Health as well as state and federal guidance from DPH and the CDC.

My last request of all of you is simple but incredibly important- PLEASE VOTE !!!!

Thank you and please stay Healthy

