

Date: July 6, 2021

To: Our Lifeworks Community

From: Daniel Burke, President/CEO

Over the past few weeks, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through the Dept. of Public Health and in conjunction with advisory from the CDC on the federal level have produced a number of updates regarding policies and procedures involving the use of masks in our programs as well as the use of masks in our communities, especially as they relate to people who are vaccinated. Please know that the Mass. Dept. of Public Health, in all of their updates will always clearly state that in their view, the persons we serve and thus our staff when directly supporting them is considered in a higher risk category than the general public. So, changes that are announced for the general public do not always apply to our programs.

With that in mind, I am pleased to announce the following modifications and clarifications regarding the use of masks by our individuals, staff, and families/visitors to our programs. These changes include the following:

1. Lifeworks will continue existing policies regarding masks for the persons we serve in our programs; either Day Habilitation, Employment or Residential, as they currently exist. However, persons served will need to wear masks when required, when attending employment sites and any community locations & volunteer activities that require them. In addition, the persons we serve are required to wear masks on vans traveling to and from the program. Individuals served who are vaccinated will not be required to wear masks indoors or outdoors in any programming, unless as stated above it is a requirement by certain establishments. We will continue to educate persons served who are unvaccinated about the advantages of vaccination as well as the wearing of masks.

2. All staff of Lifeworks who are vaccinated will not need to wear a mask in any Outdoor activity or other community location when with people whom we support. Unvaccinated staff in this situation will still need to wear a mask.

3. Staff who are transporting individuals we serve will need to wear masks. This applies to all staff, whether they are vaccinated or not. It also applies whether you are in a Lifeworks vehicle or personal vehicle and also applies whether the person we support is vaccinated or not.

4. All Lifeworks staff who are vaccinated, when performing work that is not direct clinical facing duties, will not need to wear masks during this time. This includes staff doing case management work, in offices, in administrative settings, at residences when persons served are not home or in meetings in which persons served are not present. Unvaccinated staff will need to continue to wear masks during all of these circumstances.

5. All Lifeworks staff, when performing work that is a direct clinical-facing service or in an area of a program in which persons served are being supported will need to continue to wear a mask whether vaccinated or not. This includes in residences, day programs and employment programs.

6. All families and visitors to Lifeworks programs, when indoors whether it be at a Day program or a residence, will need to wear masks and undergo a pre-screening. This applies whether vaccinated or not.

7. Families and friends of Lifeworks who are vaccinated do not have to wear a mask when with their family member or friend outside of a Lifeworks program.

We are pleased that our programs are continuing to open up and that the Commonwealth is continuing to recognize the advantages and safety provided by vaccination. Lifeworks is pleased that over 80% of our staff are vaccinated and 100% of the persons we serve in our residences are vaccinated.

For those who are not vaccinated, it remains the policy of Lifeworks to strongly encourage our employees, persons served and their families to get vaccinated. We are now six months into the vaccination program at Lifeworks and it has been a huge success. Lifeworks has a great deal of educational materials regarding vaccinations and we are ready to support all staff, persons served and their families who would like to learn more about the vaccine. Our nursing staff, led by Tess McDonald, Director of Nursing, is available for consultation and education with anyone who is interested. It is our belief that policy adjustments such as this current one will continue to be based on the percentage of vaccinations in our state, our local communities and our programs. We believe that the more people in our community who get vaccinated will continue to increase our ability to reduce restrictions.

I hope that these changes continue to assist people back into their transition to a more regular lifestyle, at home and at work.