

## **Frequently Asked Questions about NCIA's response to COVID-19**

- ✓ **What is the difference between a “normal home” right now and that of a Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3?**
  - Homes where there is no known exposure are not listed in the Quarantine Levels. Precautions such as screening, disinfecting, handwashing and social distancing should be followed at all times.
  - A Level 1 is where there has “potential” exposure of an individual in our program. All previous steps are followed in addition staff pay extra attention to any potential symptoms developing in the people living in that location.
  - Homes where an individual has symptoms and has been tested or receives a positive diagnosis/test of COVID-19 move into what is termed “Level 3”. At this point, staff agreeing to work at that location receives “HERO pay” and are provided full PPE including isolation gowns.
  - Other locations that are not at level 1, 2 or 3 should continue to support the individuals, everyone in the home should wash their hands regularly and maintain cleaning in the homes on every shift to minimize spread of the virus and keep everyone safe and healthy.
  
- ✓ **Can I refuse to work in a home where there has been a confirmed exposure, or an individual has symptoms?**
  - Yes, staff can refuse to work at a home where there has been a confirmed exposure. NCIA will attempt to reassign you to another home. Contact HR immediately if this is the case.
  
- ✓ **Why doesn't NCIA have more supplies (like PPE) for me to work in a home?**
  - NCIA has worked diligently to get more PPE supplies for staff. A shipment has finally been delivered to our organization for use by frontline staff & supervisors.
  - Beginning May 1, 2020 NCIA started providing face shields and masks to staff working in all NCIA homes for extra protection.
  - Additionally, those working in designated quarantine homes will also have access to isolation gowns to cover their clothing when working with individuals who are diagnosed with COVID or experiencing symptoms.
  
- ✓ **If staff just left working in a Level 3 Quarantine location, do they have to stay home and quarantine for 14 additional days?**
  - Not automatically. If employee does not seek healthcare, be quarantined by their own doctor or show symptoms.... they do not automatically get quarantined.
  - Staff working in a COVID+/Level 3 home, are provided around-the-clock
  - A staff person with symptoms or COVID+ cannot be forced to take off work or use their paid sick leave.

- ✓ **Why do we have to reuse some PPE in the homes, is that safe?**
  - NCIA has developed guidance and procedures to keep individuals and staff healthy throughout this emergency. The cleaning protocols provided are based upon guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for prolonging use when PPE are not available and/or hard to replace.
  
- ✓ **Can I stay at home and not work if I am afraid of getting the virus?**
  - NCIA has many resources for you to find information on the coronavirus. Please let us connect you with the information. Reach out to HR for questions or information on your work status including your options.
  - (410) 780-1300 to be directed to an HR representative during regular office hours.
  - You can also use NCIA's verified resources from our website under the "COVID19 Health Updates Section". <http://www.ncianet.org/ncia-health-updates/>
  
- ✓ **Why isn't NCIA paying a bonus to staff throughout the Residential program? Aren't we all heroes?**
  - NCIA is providing enhanced pay to all residential counselors actively working in the Residential program as well as job coaches supporting Business Services effective April 20, 2020 and HERO pay at quarantine-designated homes.
  
- ✓ **How does NCIA determine to move an individual supported or home into quarantine?**
  - NCIA follows the care and screening protocols established by Dimensional Healthcare (our nursing agency) and the doctor/healthcare provider for each person. Once symptoms have been identified, the nurse will report this to the doctor/healthcare provider and a determination will be made for testing and treatment. NCIA will follow that guidance as directed.
  - The ultimate determination for placing an individual and/or home into any specific level of Quarantine care is done by the Maryland Department of Health. MDH determine when it starts, how long it lasts and when it can be lifted.
  
- ✓ **After an employee who works around a person (who was quarantined with the virus)- can that staff start working at another location with other staff/individuals at another location?**
  - Yes, based on the CDC revised recommendations (March 21, 2020) it is safe for a critical or essential employee to work around others after a possible exposure if the following are all present:
    - Employee has not tested positive or showing symptoms
    - Employee is prescreened every shift
    - Employee has access to a mask to wear throughout the time at work
    - Employee maintains social distancing, hand hygiene and cleaning protocols as directed

- ✓ **If I have been exposed to someone who tests positive for Coronavirus/COVID-19 do I need to get a test myself?**
  - Staff should call their doctor/healthcare provider for direction. To our knowledge, the Maryland Department of Health is not authorizing testing for anyone that is not showing symptoms.
  - NCIA has in place screening questions for all staff to identify possible exposure. Beginning May 1, 2020 these forms will be completed by staff in all homes electronically on the computers in those locations. This will be compared against the staffing rosters to ensure that no staff with symptoms are working on any shift, at any time.
  - Staff may also contact the COVID hotline # (410) 887-3816 if they have questions specific to anything COVID-related (symptoms, quarantine periods, etc.).
  - If an employee wants to be tested, they have to be tested by their own primary care doctor. The employee should notify all employers about the test results.
  
- ✓ **Why am I not sent home/quarantined after I have worked with someone with COVID-19?**
  - NCIA is following the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) guidance: MDH is not recommending that healthcare workers be excluded from work after being exposed to a COVID positive person.
  - MDH advises that healthcare workers may continue to work as long as they remain ASYMPTOMATIC & continue to use universal precautions including a facemask.
  
- ✓ **If I am exposed to someone that has tested positive do, I need to tell NCIA?**
  - Yes. If you are put on quarantine by your personal doctor for any reason including testing positive for COVID-19, you are expected to notify NCIA immediately. If you work any other jobs (especially in the DDA community) you should tell them too.
  
- ✓ **If I work and am exposed to someone that has the virus will NCIA tell me?**
  - As soon as NCIA becomes aware of an exposure for a staff member (either by an individual supported or another staff member) they will be notified directly by Human Resources.