



To: Via Employees
From: Jill Pittenger, HR Director
Date: June 23, 2020
Re: Return to Work Readiness Plan

Over the last 3 months, the Via Leadership Team – Lisa Walkiewicz, Randy Letterhouse, Denise Pioli, Jill Pittenger and Michele Grasso – have been meeting daily to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The team’s goal is to ensure the health and safety of participants, employees and our community as we increase community-based services and move towards reopening our facility-based services.

As we prepare our facilities for services to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19, we continue to follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) guidelines that include frequent cleaning of high-touch surface areas, ensuring hand hygiene practices, using personal protective equipment, limiting visitors and implementing social distancing measures.

Via is in the final stages of a **Return to Work Readiness Plan** which details processes that have already been put in place and those that will be implemented as participants return to services or add additional services as the state moves from yellow into green. Below is a summary of services provided to participants over the last three months. We will continue to communicate with you as we increase services.

Service	3/2020	4/21/2020	6/8/2020
Community Participation and In-Home Support	184	51	74
Workshop	92	0	0
Adult Training Facility	18	0	0
Behavioral Support Services	30	20	25
Early Intervention	70	40	68
Job Coaching	54	12	14
Job Development	42	0	4
Job Shadowing	2	0	0
Community Based Work Assessments	18	0	0
Source America sites	8	0	3
Small Group Employment - Cigars International	53	0	0
Other Small Group Employment Sites	24	0	2
Teen Summer Experience	25	0	11
Lehigh Children’s Academy	165	14	36
Total	785	137	237



Transition Guide – for Participants

In early June, ODP sent out a Transition Guide to providers and supports coordination agencies. The Transition Guide is a person-centered tool to be completed by the Supports Coordinator, the participant and their team. The guide addresses the participant’s desire to return to community activities and settings, reviews physical health status, discusses and assesses infection control measures like hand hygiene and mask wearing, and reviews mental and behavioral health needs. The completion of the Transition Guide is driven by the Supports Coordinator; however, Via has been proactively completing Transition Guides with participants already receiving services so that all Transition Guides are completed by participants prior to returning to facility-based services.

As participants return to services, their willingness to follow hand hygiene and mask recommendations will be determined on a case-by-case basis through the Transition Guide process. If needed, goals will be developed within ISPs to further work on these objectives. Behavioral Supports will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Just like with any other goals that are included in an ISP, it is our mission to help participants achieve them.

ODP Readiness Tools

On June 10, Via received two readiness tools from ODP to be completed and submitted to Lehigh County for review and feedback. The ODP Facility Community Participation Support Readiness Tool was completed by Megan Tegyi, Chelsea Hamm and Denise Pioli and submitted on June 19. This tool assesses current COVID-19 cases, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) preparedness and amount of PPE at Via’s disposal, general agency preparedness, social distancing protocols, education and training, infection control and monitoring, and screening.

The ODP In-Home Community Support Readiness Tool was completed by Chelsea Hamm and Denise Pioli and submitted on June 16. This tool assesses current COVID-19 cases, PPE preparedness and amount of PPE at Via’s disposal, participants’ understanding of social distancing and PPE, communication occurring with families, education, monitoring and training, training plans for participants, on-going support to teach and enforce social distancing and use of PPE, and if behavioral support needs to be added to a plan.

Via’s Return to Work Readiness Plan

Via is finalizing a Return to Work Readiness Plan for the agency. This plan includes guidelines for our buildings, department specific protocols and procedures, training information, cleaning protocols, social distancing information, workforce responsibilities, and protocol and notification processes for discovery of a positive or presumptive positive case of COVID-19 for participants and employees. This plan will be shared with employees in the coming weeks.

As with so much of what has occurred over the last three months, this is a fluid plan that will evolve as we move forward. We regularly send communications to employees, participants and families that include COVID training and resources, self-screening information, and preparing for return to Via services. Each of us plays an important role in our community’s health and safety and we appreciate your feedback as we move forward together.

You can expect to see some changes over the next few weeks that will include daily screenings for participants and employees. This will include temperature checks, screening questions and self-screening.



Some other changes in the Spruce Street building will include directional signage, hand sanitizer throughout the building, and restrictions on common spaces like conference rooms, the cafeteria and kitchen areas. In the workshop and adult training facility, participants will eat lunch at their workstations or in the Creative Expressions space. Cleaning procedures for the cafeteria that were implemented in March will continue and also be implemented at workstations. The workshop bathrooms will be monitored by employees throughout the day. Proper hand hygiene will be encouraged and reinforced by employees. For those that require assistance with toileting, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided for employees.

General Employee Health and Hygiene

Our priority is to keep our employees and participants healthy, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, we will abide by governmental guidelines as we strive to balance public health concerns with the needs of our business. The protocol below describes detailed actions on how we can stay healthy in the workplace. The information is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

While we will implement various protocols to ensure your safety, it is up to you and your co-workers to execute these protocols daily. We understand that every employee's situation is different and encourage those with specific risks or concerns to reach out to their manager or HR to discuss alternate arrangements if they are needed.

Practicing good hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.

Mask Protocol

Via employees are required to wear a mask:

- Upon entering and leaving the worksite.
- When working in a common area or shared office even if you are 6 feet away from other people.
- If you work in a private office, anytime that you leave your office.

Social Distancing Protocol

Employees should follow social distancing while in the community and at Via facilities, including but not limited to workstations, cafeterias, common areas and office spaces. Specifically, employees are asked to:

- Maintain social distancing - stay 6 feet apart from others when working or on breaks. Engineering or administrative controls will be in place when a 6-foot minimum distance cannot be maintained.
- Avoid job tasks that require face-to-face work with others when possible.
- Avoid physical contact with others whenever possible (e.g., handshakes).
- Avoid touching surfaces that may have been touched by others when possible.



- Distance themselves from anyone who appears to be sick.
- Follow any posted signage regarding COVID-19 social distancing practices.
- Disinfect their workspace often.
- Avoid touching their face.
- Avoid nonessential gatherings.
- Stagger lunches to limit the number of individuals in the break room or cafeteria.
- Avoid gathering in common areas.

Via will:

- Modify the office layout to create at least 6 feet of distance between employee workstations and change face-to-face desk layouts as needed.
- Eliminate in-person meetings whenever possible until all social distancing requirements are lifted. Instead, employees should conduct virtual meetings.
- Provide COVID-19 training for employees.

Via looks forward to welcoming participants back and are counting on all of us to help this occur safely. Please continue to communicate with your supervisor if you have any questions or would like more information. Via will communicate over the next several weeks when and how facility-based services will reopen.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to Jill Pittenger at J.Pittenger@ViaNet.org or 484-893-5373 or your supervisor.

Please visit the Employee Resource page for FAQs, COVID-19 resources and communications.
www.ViaNet.org/COVID19-EmployeeResources/