



To: Via Participants & Employees

From: Denise Pioli, Vice President of Services
Jill Pittenger, Vice President of Human Resources

Date: July 20, 2021

Re: Updated Guidance for Infection Control and Mitigation for ODP Home & Community-Based Services Providers

Guidance was recently issued by the Pennsylvania Office of Development Programs (see [ODP Announcement 21-048](#) for complete bulletin) to provide updated guidance to providers of ODP Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) related to infection control procedures and mitigation of the spread of COVID-19.

This guidance makes recommendations as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Via has made revisions to [Via's Pandemic Response Plan](#) based on the CDC's recommendations, Via's participant and employee vaccination rates, and Lehigh County's COVID-19 PCR Percent Positivity Rate (PCR). These revisions are being implemented with the health and safety of Via participants and their families, Via employees and their families, and the community in mind.

89% of Via's adult services employees, supervisors and administration are fully vaccinated. 74% of participants who have returned to services are fully or partially vaccinated. Vaccination rates by department are detailed below.

As of Friday, Lehigh County is at 2.3% PCR. This places Lehigh County at a *Low Level of Community Transmission*. The prior week, the PCR for Lehigh County was 1.4%.

Level of Community Transmission in the County	PCR Percent Positivity (Most Recent 7 Days)
Low	Less than 5%
Moderate	5% to 10%
Substantial	Greater than 10%

Updated guidance by service is outlined on pages 2 through 7 of this communication.

Resources:

- *Guidance for Infection Control and Mitigation for ODP Home and Community Based Services Providers (ODP Announcement 21-048)*
 - <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/coronavirus/Pages/ODP-Infection-Control-Mitigation-for-ODP-HCBS-Providers.aspx>
- *COVID-19 Early Warning Monitoring System Dashboard*
 - <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx>

336 West Spruce Street | Bethlehem, PA 18018
610-317-8000 | fax 610-867-5385
ViaNet.org | Via@ViaNet.org



Via's Mission: Helping the people we serve reach their full potential.



Community-Based Services

Community Connections, Autism Services, Behavioral Supports

Currently, 79% of Direct Support Professionals and supervisors that provide support and services in Via's Community-Based Services are fully vaccinated. 76% of participants who have returned to services are fully or partially vaccinated.

Participants

- Masking
 - When services are provided in community or home settings, state and local guidelines for physical distancing and masking for the applicable setting should be followed.
 - **For those who ARE vaccinated**, masks are optional while in community settings. Guidelines for specific locations must be followed (i.e. public transportation, doctor's offices, etc.).
 - **If you are NOT vaccinated**, masks continue to be required while receiving services.
 - **Masks are required at all times while transportation is provided by Via employees**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If you want your Direct Service Professional to wear a mask while providing services, Via employees will accommodate that request.

- Daily Health and Temperature Screenings will continue, per CDC recommendations.

Employees

- Masking
 - While the PCR for Lehigh County remains in the *Low Level* (less than 5%), **for those who ARE vaccinated**, masks are optional while in community or home settings. Guidelines for specific locations must be followed (i.e. public transportation, doctor's offices, etc.).
 - Please Note: CDC guidance recommends that Direct Service Professionals providing services in community settings wear a mask while at work.
 - **If you are NOT vaccinated**, masks continue to be required while working.
 - **Masks are required at all times while transportation is provided by Via employees**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If the participant you are serving prefers that you wear a mask while delivering services, that request must be accommodated.
 - If the participant you are supporting is not vaccinated, it is recommended that you wear a mask.

- Daily Health and Temperature Screenings will continue, per CDC recommendations.



Facility Based-Services Vocational Services

Currently, 93% of Direct Support Professionals and supervisors that provide support and services in Via's Vocational Services are fully vaccinated. 85% of participants who have returned to services are fully or partially vaccinated.

Participants & Employees

- Masks continue to be required while receiving services at Via's Vocational Workshop.
- Daily Health and Temperature Screenings will continue, per CDC recommendations.

Adult Training Services

Currently, 100% of Direct Support Professionals and supervisors that provide support and services in Via's Adult Training Services are fully vaccinated. 89% of participants who have returned to services are fully or partially vaccinated.

Participants

- Masking
 - Masks continue to be required while receiving services at Via's Adult Training Facility location.
 - When services are provided in community settings, state and local guidelines for physical distancing and masking for the applicable setting should be followed.
 - **For those who ARE vaccinated**, masks are optional while in community settings. Guidelines for specific locations must be followed (i.e. public transportation, doctor's offices, etc.).
 - **If you are NOT vaccinated**, masks continue to be required while receiving services.
 - **Masks are required at all times while transportation is provided by Via employees**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If you want your Direct Service Professional to wear a mask while providing services, Via employees will accommodate that request.
- Daily Health and Temperature Screenings will continue, per CDC recommendations.

Employees

- Masking
 - Masks continue to be required while delivering services at Via's Adult Training Facility location.
 - While the PCR for Lehigh County remains in the *Low Level* (less than 5%), **for those who ARE vaccinated**, masks are optional while in community settings. Guidelines for specific locations must be followed (i.e. public transportation, doctor's offices, etc.).
 - Please Note: CDC guidance recommends that Direct Service Professionals providing services in community settings wear a mask while at work.
 - **If you are NOT vaccinated**, masks continue to be required while working.
 - **Masks are required at all times while transportation is provided by Via employees**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If the participant you are serving prefers that you wear a mask while delivering services, that request must be accommodated.
 - If the participant you are supporting is not vaccinated, it is recommended that you wear a mask.
- Daily Health and Temperature Screenings will continue, per CDC recommendations.



Employment Services *Community Employment*

Currently, 100% of Direct Support Professionals and supervisors that provide support and services in Via's Community Employment are fully vaccinated. 74% of participants who have returned to services are fully or partially vaccinated.

Participants

- Masking
 - When services are provided in community settings, state and local guidelines for physical distancing and masking for the applicable setting should be followed.
 - Guidelines for your worksite must be followed.
 - **Masks are required at all times while transportation is provided by Via employees**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If you want your Direct Service Professional to wear a mask while providing services, Via employees will accommodate that request.

- Follow your worksite protocols for daily Health and Temperature Screenings.

Employees

- Masking
 - Guidelines for your participant's worksite must be followed.
 - While the PCR for Lehigh County remains in the *Low Level* (less than 5%), **for those who ARE vaccinated**, masks are optional while in community settings. Guidelines for specific locations must be followed (i.e. public transportation, doctor's offices, etc.).
 - Please Note: CDC guidance recommends that Direct Service Professionals providing services in community settings wear a mask while at work.
 - **If you are NOT vaccinated**, masks continue to be required while working.
 - **Masks are required at all times while transportation is provided by Via employees**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If the participant you are serving prefers that you wear a mask while delivering services, that request must be accommodated.
 - If the participant you are supporting is not vaccinated, it is recommended that you wear a mask.

- Daily Health and Temperature Screenings will continue, per CDC recommendations.



Employment Services Small Group Employment

Currently, 91% of Direct Support Professionals and supervisors that provide support and services in Via's Small Group Employment are fully vaccinated. 59% of participants who have returned to services are fully or partially vaccinated.

Masks are required for all Participants and Employees at the following worksites:

- Cigars International
- ABEC
- Cahn Federal Courthouse
- Lehigh Valley International Airport Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- Sgt Ashly Moyer Memorial US Army Reserve

Participants

- Masking
 - When services are provided in community settings, state and local guidelines for physical distancing and masking for the applicable setting should be followed at the following worksites:
 - Habitat ReStore
 - Habitat for Humanity Offices
 - Kolbe Academy
 - St. John Vianney Regional School
 - Trinity United Church of Christ
 - Via Thrift Store
 - Guidelines for your worksite must be followed.
 - **For those who ARE vaccinated**, masks are optional while in community settings. Guidelines for specific locations must be followed (i.e. public transportation, doctor's offices, etc.).
 - **If you are NOT vaccinated**, masks continue to be required while receiving services.
 - **Masks are required at all times while transportation is provided by Via employees**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If you want your Direct Service Professional to wear a mask while providing services, Via employees will accommodate that request.
- Follow your worksite protocols for daily Health and Temperature Screenings.

Employees

- Masking
 - Guidelines for your participant's worksite must be followed.
 - While the PCR for Lehigh County remains in the *Low Level* (less than 5%), **for those who ARE vaccinated**, masks are optional while in community settings. Guidelines for specific locations must be followed (i.e. public transportation, doctor's offices, etc.).
 - Please Note: CDC guidance recommends that Direct Service Professionals providing services in community settings wear a mask while at work.
 - **If you are NOT vaccinated**, masks continue to be required while working.
 - **Masks are required at all times while transportation is provided by Via employees**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - If the participant you are serving prefers that you wear a mask while delivering services, that request must be accommodated.
 - If the participant you are supporting is not vaccinated, it is recommended that you wear a mask.
- Daily Health and Temperature Screenings will continue, per CDC recommendations.



Administrative Offices
Spruce Street, 1020 S. Cedar Crest

Currently, 94% of Via administrative employees are fully vaccinated.

- Masking
 - All employees must wear masks in *licensed spaces* at Via of the Lehigh Valley while participants are being served in those spaces.
 - This includes both sides of the Workshop where vocational services occur back to the entrance of the Bale Area, the hallways from Reception Area to both Workshop Entrance Doors and to the Cafeteria, and Adult Training spaces. Excluded are the Bale Area, Loading Dock and Storage Shed off the Loading Dock.
 - **For those who ARE vaccinated**, masks are optional while in the office setting.
 - **If you are NOT vaccinated**, masks continue to be required when:
 - Working in a common area or shared space even if 6 feet away from other people.
 - If you work in a private office, any time you leave your office or if another person enters your office.
 - Meetings should be held remotely when possible.
- State and local guidelines for physical distancing and masking for the applicable setting should be followed.
- Daily Health and Temperature Screenings will continue, per CDC recommendations.



Health & Safety Information

Via will continue to make informed choices about protecting the health and safety of individuals and employees, as well as their families. This includes, but is not limited to, deciding whether to change the method of service delivery (remote versus in-person, in-home versus in congregate settings, 1 staff supporting 1 individual versus groups of individuals) and implementing or increasing other COVID-19 mitigation strategies in alignment with applicable COVID-19 guidance.

Individuals have the right to make choices and accept risks, control their own schedule and activities, choose where, when and how to receive needed services, and voice concerns about the services the individual receives. As a provider of services for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, Via is required to educate, assist and provide the accommodation necessary for individuals to make choices and understand the above rights. Via is also required to provide or arrange for physical site accommodations to meet the individual's health and safety needs.

If you are not fully vaccinated, please consider talking with your healthcare provider and support team to determine what services are the best fit for you. If you wish to change or alter the services provided to you by Via of the Lehigh Valley, please contact your Program Coordinator to make those arrangements.

Continued Exposure/Quarantine Info for Vaccinated Individuals

If it has been at least 2 weeks from receiving the 2nd dose of a 2-Dose Vaccine, or at least 2 weeks from receiving a 1-Dose Vaccine, and no more than 3 months, employee/participants do not need to quarantine if they have an COVID-19 exposure or potential exposure. If an employee/participant has an exposure or potential exposure, the notification process remains in place. Contact HR and your supervisor if this occurs and watch for symptoms for 14 days after exposure.

Continued Infection Control & Mitigation Strategies

Participants, their caregivers and employees can take steps to protect themselves and their loved ones by helping reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community, at Via's services and at home.

Promote behaviors that reduce spread:

- Encourage COVID-19 vaccination.
- Stay home when appropriate.
- Wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart and assist participants in wearing masks.
- Wash your hands often, and ensure participants can wash their hands appropriately.
- Stay safe when using transportation.

Via will continue to maintain healthy environments through cleaning and disinfecting shared spaces, reinforcing prevention strategies, using signs and messages throughout the facility, and other protocols as outlined in [Via's Pandemic Response Plan](#).

Participants: If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Program Coordinator.

Employees: If you have any questions, please contact Human Resources at HR@ViaNet.org, J.Pittenger@ViaNet.org or Jenna Trach J.Trach@ViaNet.org.