Day services for people with disabilities: Resumption of program activities

In recognition of the state’s vaccination progress and guidance from public health experts, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is lifting COVID-19 restrictions for operating facilities that provide day services for people with disabilities. To align with the Governor’s Executive Order 21-21, these restrictions are lifted effective May 28, 2021.

What will change on May 28 for day service facilities?

- Return to regular days and hours of operation as approved by DHS Licensing prior to COVID-19.
- Participants do not have to be strictly maintained in cohorts; however, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be an important health concern for your program. You may find that keeping people in separate activity groups will reduce the likelihood of the spread of COVID-19 or minimize its impact.
- Strict social distancing is not required; however, it is also a means of effective disease mitigation that can continue to be used by your program.
- Operate at full capacity, meaning the licensed capacity approved by DHS Licensing, if you were not operating at full capacity due to limitations created by maintaining cohorts and social distancing.
- Eliminating mandatory quarantines from your program regardless of exposure or vaccine status. If you do learn of a potential exposure to COVID-19 you must follow the most current guidance from MDH regarding exposure and quarantines.

What are ongoing requirements and recommendations?

- Providers, like all businesses within Minnesota, are required to follow requirements within Minnesota’s Stay Safe Plan, as outlined in Executive Order 21-21. This includes a requirement to maintain a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, provide the plan to its staff, ensure training is provided to staff on the contents of its plan, and make the plan available to regulatory authorities and public safety officers upon request. Your plan should continue to be updated to reflect your most current program operation, including updated recommendations from Stay Safe MN and MDH. Your plans will continue to describe how you clean and disinfect your day service facility and practices by which you will screen for and respond to signs and symptoms of COVID-19. If you directly provide transportation to participants, your plan must address how any needed mitigation efforts will be implemented during transportation.
- License holders are required to follow existing licensing standards, including the requirement under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 15. “Pandemic planning. Upon request, the license holder must cooperate with state and local government disaster planning agencies working to prepare for or react to emergencies presented by a pandemic outbreak.” At this time license holders should follow and comply with MDH’s strong recommendation that when indoors all unvaccinated
participants and staff wear face masks and, regardless of vaccination status, face masks should be worn at all times by people with compromised immune systems.

- Participants continue to have a choice about whether they want to receive services from you at your day service facility. Discussion with the person, their legal representative, and case manager could help people identify their questions and concerns. Some persons may be hesitant to return to a center-based program after an extended absence and with continued concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic. You may share the content of your COVID-19 Preparedness Plan as one way to help them understand the changes in your program that are in place to maintain their health. You may also share aggregate, non-individualized data about the vaccine status of staff and participants. For example, you can share the percentage of staff and participants that have been fully vaccinated.
- The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be the most effective way to keep people healthy and to bring them closer to full community engagement. You are encouraged to provide ongoing information to participants and staff who are hesitant to receive a vaccine. Sharing information and stories from trusted people is a positive way to help people overcome their hesitancy to be vaccinated.
- If you would like to host a community vaccination clinic for participants, family members, or staff, please submit a request to MDH at https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/670f865fdef5494cbab079487b58dd45.

Other helpful guidance

- Stay Safe MN: COVID-19 Universal Guidance for All Businesses and Entities
- Stay Safe MN Guidance for Behavioral Health and Disability Services: Behavioral Health / StaySafeMN
- Minnesota Department of Health: Information for Adult Day Centers and Day Service Facilities with a Confirmed Case of COVID-19
- CDC guidance: Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People
- MDH face mask guidance: Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations
- DHS informed choice: CBSM – Guide to encouraging informed choice and discussing risk
- DHS assisting in choice making: Facilitating Choice Making
- Vaccines: Key Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines and Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine