

# Walnut Street Center

  

## Day Services

  

## Reopening Plan



7/2020

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## Background and Document Purpose

On March 10, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker declared a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Executive Order No. 591: Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID- 19). On March 17, 2020 WSC closed all Day Programs. On March 24, 2020, the Department of Public Health (DPH) issued an emergency order requiring day programs to cease providing services in congregate settings. On May 18, 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration announced [Reopening Massachusetts](#), a comprehensive phased plan to safely reopen the Massachusetts economy, get people back to work, and ease social restrictions while minimizing the health impacts of COVID-19.

Our mission is to empower people who have intellectual disabilities to live engaged and meaningful lives. For many of our member/participants and families we cannot do this without providing in person supports. We believe that our services are essential and that in many cases the benefits of the service outweigh the risks of the setting.

We crafted this document to help explain the steps that WSC has taken to prepare for reopening of our Day Services. We have heard from many member/participants and families that while they appreciate the option of remote supports they cannot replace in-person programming.

The safety of our member/participants and staff are very important to WSC. We are doing everything in our power to protect both parties, but we also must acknowledge that there is an inherent risk in operating and participating in congregate settings. Until there is an effective treatment and/or vaccine we cannot guarantee that member/participants and staff will remain Covid free despite efforts described below.

## Preparation and Planning

All of our Day Service (Day Habilitation and CBDS) are housed at 291 Mystic Ave., Medford MA 02155. The building holds both our Day Services and our Administrative offices. The building is 42,000 sq. ft with 10,000 dedicated to administrative space and the remaining 32,000 sq ft dedicated to program space. *(see attached floor plan)*

The 32,000 sq ft of program space contains 14 learning spaces, 7 communal use spaces (cafeteria, fitness center, art room, computer lab), 9 bathrooms, 7 of which are single , 2 single use changing rooms and 12 staff office spaces. Additionally, the program space has three private entrances to be used by staff and member/participants only.



Preparation for our reopening involved examining each of the following areas.

1. **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT** -implementing environmental enhancements needed to increase member/participant and employee safety.
  - a. Our physical spaces will:
    - i. be clearly marked with floor and wall decals denoting directional, access/egress and safe distancing
    - ii. Identify the maximum number of people who should occupy each partitioned area in a manner that ensures at least 6 Ft of distance between individuals - 113 sq ft will be allocated for each person
    - iii. All groups will be less than 10. Two groups of under 10 may share the same space as long the square footage requirement is met.
    - iv. All members/participants will have their own table or desk and they will face the front of the workspace.
    - v. All program spaces will be marked with maximum capacity and Sq ft.
    - vi. Shared spaces will be reallocated for classroom use or closed
    - vii. Drinking fountains, coffee areas, break areas et will be closed
    - viii. All systems (HVAC, Plumbing) are inspected on a regular schedule.
    - ix. Our offices have remained open throughout the pandemic at a reduced capacity and the building has been maintained
2. **MEMBER/PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT** – WSC assessed each member/participant and their ability to return based on compliance with accepted safety practices such as wearing of masks and maintaining social distance. Member/participants were classified as one of the following:
  - a. Lower risk - invited to return to services upon opening
  - b. Higher risk – invited to return to services once the program has been open at least 60 days without incidents of illness
  - c. Critical risk – members/participants for whom contracting Covid would likely be critical and therefore we are recommending they not attend day programs until a reliable treatment or vaccine is discovered

Member/participant, guardians and caregivers were surveyed to see if they would like to return and if so, what changes they would like to see put in place. Additionally, transportation to and from program was discussed. WSC does not provide transportation services to its members *(Addendum 1 risk benefit assessment and survey)*

3. **CLEANING PLAN**– WSC will use EPA approved cleaning solutions for all disinfecting/sanitizing tasks. WSC has a cleaner dedicated to the Day Program. This person will clean and disinfect the site throughout the day: focusing on bathroom and



railings, light switches, doorknobs etc. in common areas. Additionally, at the end of the program day a cleaning company will disinfect all spaces used during program hours, as well as deep clean bathrooms and all floors.

Each day Direct Support Staff follow a cleaning checklist and will at minimum

- Wipe down bathroom after each use
- Wipe down any item used by more than one person after each use.
- Wipe down all surfaces in their workspace each hour
- At the end of each day employee will wipe down all surfaces

WSC maintains a stock of cleaning supply including but not limited to: Lysol spray, Clorox wipes, Clorox spray cleaner, alcohol wipes, bleach, toilet paper, paper towels, trash bags etc. We purchase and keep a stock of items that will be used quickly or become difficult to get during the pandemic. We keep a month's supply in the main office.

4. **SICK PLAN** – WSC requires each member/participant to be screened at home prior to coming to Day Program. In addition, each person will be screened prior to entering the building.

Employees will self-screen and then assist member/participant or their caregiver to complete the screening questions or to perform a visual check.

Daily screening will include:

Checking temperature (temperature of 100.0°F or above is considered a fever); WSC installed three facial recognition temporal detection scanners. Each member/participant and staff person will scan upon entering the Day Program. The scanner will advise if they are safe to enter or not. The scanner will also give them a reminder to wear a face mask. The scanner will then store that information and reports should the information be needed.

Checking for Covid symptoms and answering two targeted questions:

- a. Fever (temperature of 100.0°F or above), felt feverish, or had chills?
- b. Cough?
- c. Sore throat?
- d. Difficulty breathing?
- e. Abdominal pain?
- f. Unexplained Rash?
- g. Fatigue?



- h. Headache?
- i. New loss of smell/taste?
- j. New muscle aches?
- k. Nausea or vomiting?
- l. Diarrhea?

Have you received a positive test result for COVID-19? When was the date of the test? Are you waiting to receive results of a COVID-19 test?

In the past 14 days, have you had close contact with a person known to be infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

5. **ISOLATION PLAN** – Employees/participants/members that arrive to work sick will not be permitted into the building and will be send home immediately, if possible.

If Employees/participants/members need to enter the building to arrange or wait for rides or use the bathroom the following will be implemented:

- Employees/Member/participants that arrive sick or become sick during the day will be housed in one of our two isolation areas until they can be picked up by their caregiver, guardian, or staff/member at their residence as soon as possible. WSC has designated two rooms that were previously used as sensory rooms to be used for isolation areas. These rooms will be equipped with comfortable furniture and individuals will be provided with activities and supervision until they can leave the program.
- Isolation room will use a separate designated restroom, which is identified as the ADL room for the “front” isolation area and the multiple stall bathrooms for the “back” isolation area.
- Nursing will always be available to assess the member/participant when they are in program if emergency medical care is required.

In addition to isolation, whenever possible, WSC will cover participants’ noses and mouths with appropriate PPE (i.e., a facemask or face covering, if not available).

WSC has a communication plan in place for members/participants and their caregivers. Each person’s record contains an emergency contact. Should an individual arrive or become sick at WSC or require emergency medical treatment the existing protocol will be followed. Additionally, each participant and/or participant’s caregiver/guardian will be given information outlining guidelines for contacting their health care provider, testing and quarantining.



Self-Quarantining and Self-Isolating Following Exposure or Potential Exposure: In the event that a staff or a participant is exposed to a sick or symptomatic person, the following protocols must be followed:

If a member/participant discloses that they have been exposed to COVID-19, regardless of whether the individual has symptoms or not, the participant must not be permitted to enter the program space and must be sent home. Exposed individuals must be directed to stay home for at least 14 days after the last day of contact with the person who is sick. Additionally, they will be required to show a proof of a negative COVID test.

If an exposed member/participant or staff subsequently tests positive or their health care provider reports they have confirmed or probable COVID-19, they must be directed to stay home for a minimum of 10 days from the 1st day of symptoms appearing AND be fever-free for 72 hours without fever reducing medications AND experience significant improvements in symptoms.

If a staff person discloses that they have been exposed to COVID -19 they will be tested for COVID and sent home pending the results. Staff will be advised to follow up with their PCP and follow their recommendations. WSC has testing kits available at 291 Mystic Ave. All staff are tested 1x monthly and the tests are available in the event of exposure.

As of May 4, 2020, the CDC is not recommending that essential workers self-quarantine after an exposure if they are not experiencing COVID-9 symptoms. Therefore, if they become symptomatic, they will be sent home immediately to quarantine. If they remain asymptomatic and/ or test negative they may continue working in accordance with the DPH Occupational Exposure & Return to Work Guidance. *(see attached addendum 3)*

The program must consult the local board of health for guidance on quarantine for other participants and staff and what additional precautions will be needed to ensure the program space is safe for continued services.

6. **DPH COORDINATION PLAN** – we will continue to contact the local DPH and ask them to review our reopening plan; to date they have declined. We will continue to report all new positive or presumptive cases of Covid-19 to the local DPH and follow their recommendations.

7. **TRANSPORTATION PLAN** – WSC did not provide transportation prior to Covid and with the exception of the participants and members that live in our residential programs will not provide transportation as part of our Day Services.
8. **PROGRAM CLOSURE/STAFFING CRISIS PLAN** – WSC has recalled our existing Day Program staff back from the residential programs and is able to meet required staffing ratios. In the event of call outs or staffing shortages WSC will continue to provide the needed staffing by utilizing internal per diem staff, then overtime, and as a last resort agency staff.
9. **MEAL PROVISION PLAN** – No meals or snacks will be provided. Member/participants will be advised to bring cold lunches only and to bring a bottled drink or water bottle.
10. **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION PLAN** – No medication is administered in our CBDS program. Day Habilitation member/participants receive medication assistance from our nursing staff. Nursing staff will continue to give medication while maintaining social distancing if possible and if not, they will try to limit their exposure to under 15 minutes. In all cases the appropriate PPE will be worn.
11. **COMMUNICATION PLAN** – A communication plan exists and will continue to be followed. To summarize: all emergency contact information is in the member/participants record. The information is updated regularly and was updated as people returned for the reopening. For regular daily communications we work with interested parties to establish a plan that best meets their wants and needs. In some cases, daily communication occurs through a book that is carried by the member/participant. In other cases, weekly or monthly emails are used. Each member/participant and the people involved in their lives will be contacted and their preference for communication will be reassessed.

In addition, our Website is being used as our communication hub. Regular written COVID updates are posted there and well as reopening/continuous operation plans. Should there be a need to close down Day Programs temporarily or permanently those plans would be explained on the website – [www/wscinc.org](http://www/wscinc.org)

All Caregiver/guardians, members/participants and individuals deciding to return to our Day Program upon reopening will be directed to self-screen at home. They will be provided with educational materials about the signs and symptoms as well as the daily screening questions. Further caregivers/guardians and emergency contacts will be given and must sign a Covid 19 Acknowledgment of Risk form prior to returning to program.



The final preemptive communication will be a letter to the PCP of the member/participant letting them know that WSC has assessed this person to have a higher benefit than risk factor related to returning to Day Program and giving them the opportunity to object if they wish to.

Communication in the event of an instance of Covid or exposure to Covid will be as follows:

- Medical attention will be given as required
- Guardian, caregiver, or emergency contact will be contacted
- DDS Service Coordinator or other funding source will be contacted. DDS tracker will be filled out if appropriate
- Local DPH will be contacted, as needed. We will follow their advice for notification, contact tracing, isolation, closure, and cleaning

## **Staffing and Operations**

New standard operating procedures for Day Program employees were put in place to accommodate the “new” normal. Day Service employees will be required to:

- Enter and exit through an assigned door.
- Scan when entering or exiting the building. Employees will be required to use a thermal detection scanner which register their temperature each time they enter or exit the building.
- Utilize Personal Protective Equipment. Employees will always be required to wear a surgical or KN95 mask. Gloves will always be available, and staff will be advised to wear gloves for certain activities. Additional PPE available include face shields, safety goggles, gowns and hand sanitizers. These items will be utilized according to CDC guidelines.
- Maintain a 6 ft social distance whenever possible. We acknowledge that this will be difficult and, in many cases, impossible with the population we support. The space for 6 ft distancing will be made available in all program spaces.
- Frequent handwashing. Every program room and areas throughout the building have hand sanitizing stations. Additionally, sinks for handwashing have been added to program areas in five designated locations to increase accessibility for all member/participants.
- Building use restrictions:

- common use spaces like the cafeteria will be closed or reallocated as program space
  - certain hallways and or entrances may be blocked/restricted
  - traffic flow will be one direction as much as possible and marked accordingly
  - areas not needed to complete daily tasks will be restricted i.e. HR or finance
  - work materials will not be shared whenever possible. Day Program staff will be assigned their own iPad for use while working. These devices will be used to clock in and out of shift and to complete all required documentation.
- Member/participants will be assigned to a cohort that will stay together each time they come to Day Program.
  - The same staff will work with the same cohort whenever possible.
  - Upon arrival at the program the member/participant will be greeted by their assigned staff, in the drop off area, at a section allocated for their work room cohort. Covid screening will be conducted, the cohort will then enter the building and pass the thermal detection scanner which will take their temperature and alert if a mask is not worn, and lastly the cohort will be escorted to their work area.
  - There will be no formalized outings planned for Day Program. Groups may be encouraged to utilize the outdoor space attached to our building or to go on short walks in the community if appropriate.
  - Each cohort will stay in their assigned area for the entirety of the day. All site-based activities will occur in said area.
  - Activities that require minimum interaction and encourage social distancing will be planned i.e. disposable or single use activities and games, work sheets, movies etc.
  - Staffing shortages will be filled first with staff employed by WSC and then by staffing agencies as identified in our Collective Bargaining Agreement.

### **Group sizes, Staffing and Ratio Requirements**

Group size will be determined by the size of the space that they are assigned to and will not exceed 10. Staff to member/participant ratio will be determined based on the square footage of a workspace. 113 feet will be allotted for each person.

Staff will have a desk in a location central to the workspace and desks or worktables will be arranged to face the staff desk.

Cohorts will be partnered with an adjacent cohort to help with times when staff need a break or lunch as well as times when extra supervision may be needed. Additionally, there are 2 managers and a nurse that are available to provide staff supports.



## Training and Monitoring

When WSC's day program closed in March, most employees were redeployed to our residential programs and have been working throughout the pandemic. They have already received our full suite of Covid training including:

- Read and Sign Training packet:
  - Congregate care guidance
  - CDC fact sheets
  - Internal WSC policies
  - RTW graphic
  - Poster of guidelines, facts and protocols
- Relias Training
  - Hand Hygiene: The basics
  - Infection Control: Airborne Precautions
  - Risk Mitigation Protocol – WSC
  - CDC fact sheets
  - Discontinuation of work and Isolation protocols - WSC

For employees returning to the Day Program in addition to the Covid Training plan above we will require EOHHS agency mandated trainings as well as the following:

- (1) Social distancing in a congregate setting
- (2) PPE - when and what type to wear, including close proximity situations such as ADL supported tasks, donning, doffing, disposal, and maintaining integrity of equipment
- (3) Cleaning and disinfecting - schedule and procedure
- (4) Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19
- (5) Transporting participants safely and vehicle disinfection protocols
- (6) Hand washing protocols, scheduling, and monitoring for staff and program participants
- (7) Agency Communication Plan for reporting symptomatic cases of both staff and participants
- (8) Human Resource policies regarding self-monitoring and not coming to work with symptoms
- (9) Group management and staffing plan during each phase of the reopening

WSC has a two-person Quality and Training team, two Case Coordinators, an RN and two managers that will have a shared responsibility to ensure that staff are trained initially and implementing the required safety protocols.

## Hygiene and Health practices

WSC purchased three facial recognition temporal detection scanners. Each member/participant and staff person will scan upon entering the Day Program. The scanner



will advise if they are safe to enter or not. The scanner will also give them a reminder to wear a face mask, if they are not wearing one. The scanner will then store that information and reports should the information be needed.

Additional hand washing stations have been added to common areas and classrooms so that everyone will have increase access to soap and water. Additional hand sanitizer stations have been added to common areas.

Hygiene stations that contain gloves, masks, tissues, and hand sanitizer have been added throughout the building.

Common or communal use areas have been converted to workspace or are closed.

Signs have been put in place to indicate direction and encourage social distancing.

Drop off area is sectioned off according to work locations i.e. the Fenway room. Members/ participants will be greeted by staff and escorted to their cohort drop off area. Once the cohort is complete the staff will complete the screening questions, temporal scanning and proceed to the work location.

The cohorts have been assigned work areas that allow the groups that live in WSC residences to share space which is separate from the individuals that live in residences outside of WSC's management. The cohorts that are comprised of individuals from WSC residences have been further separated by those who previously tested Covid positive and those that have not. These cohorts and their locations are established for an August 3, 2020 opening and may have to change to accommodate members needs.

iPads were purchased for each Day staff person. They will use these tablets to clock in and out for shifts and to collect all daily data and notes. The object is to reduce the use of shared items i.e. notebooks, pens etc.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

WSC currently maintains a supply of:

- Surgical, KN95 and Cloth masks
- Gloves – vinyl nitrate
- Googles and face shields
- Gowns
- No touch thermometers
- Oximeters
- Hand sanitizer



These are the PPE items that we currently have in stock. We have been able to maintain this stock throughout the pandemic. We monitor the stock, order in advance, and always maintain at least a two-week supply.

### **Food Safety**

All members/participants/staff will be advised that only cold lunches requiring no preparation will be allowed in the Day Program. No microwaves will be available. Refrigerators have been added to each workspace so that people can store their lunches until break time. Everyone will eat in their work location with their cohort. There will be no use of the cafeteria. Staff will have access to their break area, but the table will be removed and congregating in these areas will be discouraged.

WSC has purchased single serving, individually wrapped utensils and will distribute them as needed. Also, we purchased 8 oz bottle water and individually wrapped snacks to be used as needed.

Again, all common area water fountains, bubblers, coffee stations, etc. will be removed.

### **Member/participants requiring enhanced ADL supports**

In the first phase of the reopening we do not have anyone attending that needs enhanced ADL support. In our second phase as census increases and this becomes a need, the staff will follow established protocols currently being used in our residential programs. Additionally, PPE will be provided as appropriate. The last phase will be a return of full census, which would include members needing more consistently extensive hands on care, will not be happening before the 1/21 and possibly not until there is a vaccine.

### **Hybrid Service Model**

Day Services were closed from 3/17/20 through 8/3/20. During this time WSC provided case management / support services via the telephone as recommended by DDS and MA Health. Members/participants that live in our residential programs had the benefit of our redeployed Day staff and were not the focus of the "tele-health" calls but did receive those supports as needed. Participants/members that live independently or with family were and continue to be the focus of telephonic supports and currently receive contact three times weekly.

Another alteration to services that began with the shutdown was the development and distribution of curricula via Zoom. These engagement opportunities were offered equally to participants/members regardless of their living situation.



Training of the use of remote services and assessment of the needed equipment was done via the case management calls or by the house assigned to the residential programs.

Since the reopening participants/members that returned to in person day services are not eligible for remote learning, unless they are returning part time. As for folks that are not able or willing to return, some enjoy participating in the online or remote classes. WSC plans to continue to offer remote classes and activities. Additionally, for members that do not live in supported housing models WSC continues to offer case management/check-in calls three times weekly. During these calls support givers and members engage in clinical or indirect therapy depending on the needs of the participate. Various topics including but not limited to:

Checking for COVID-19 symptoms and triaging, as needed, Providing mental and emotional wellness checks and supports, Employing interventions to promote member orientation of person, place, and time, Coordinating care and activities of daily living (ADL) as well as coordinating instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), Monitoring and encouraging progress towards DHSP goals, valuating service need areas: self-help, sensory motor skills, communication, independent living, affective development, social and behavior development, and wellness, Providing caregiver support, especially for informal caregivers supporting the member, Providing caregiver support and supplying positive behavior support strategies, Providing individual/small group activity providing opportunities for development, enhancement, and maintenance of competency in personal, social & community activities and which support the member to achieve goals outlined in their DHSP and Follow up and referral support.

## **Reopening our Day Programs**

WSC believes that for many of the people we support our services are essential to their wellbeing and we look forward to the reopening of our Day Programs. We do however acknowledge that there is an increased risk of Covid -19 transmission anytime that you are not sheltering at home, and that risk increases in congregate settings. In addition to the risk of our setting there is an additional risk due to the people that we support having medical and/or behavioral challenges that can be a barrier to effectively exercising risk mitigation activities like wearing a face mask or social distancing. WSC encourages each member/participant and the stakeholders in their lives to carefully consider all their circumstances before deciding to return to program.

