

Protections and Protocols for: MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS (MHP)

At this time, Alliance's MHPs are currently working a blend of telehealth and in-home visits based off of client needs. A majority of client visits and meetings are currently being conducted through telehealth options (phone and video) with a limited number of in-home visits with client's who are unable to receive services via telehealth to ensure the health and safety of the client and the MHP who is providing their services.

Currently, the office building our MHP's generally work from is unlocked and open to the public. However, if needed, appointments are strongly encouraged due to numerous employees following the hybrid or full-time work from home schedule. The following portion of this plan applies to MHP's who may occasionally gain access to the building as needed and MHP's who are providing in-home visits.

HANDLING SICK EMPLOYEES

The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess employees' health status prior to entering the office building and/or entering a client's home and for employees to report when they are sick and/or experiencing symptoms.

Employee Health Screening/Self Monitoring/Reporting Policy

Employees who are coming into the office are required to take their temperatures at home, self-assess their symptoms, and report concerns to Alliance. Employees should contact the Directors of Nursing at 651-895-8030 to make a report. Employees must stay home and report any of the following symptoms that may apply:

- Temp of 100.3 or greater (with or without accompanying symptoms)
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Loss of smell and/or taste
- Fatigue
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Employees who have self monitored from home and are symptom free, are to don an appropriate cloth mask for the visit before entering their client's home and wash/sanitize their hands immediately upon arrival before beginning to work with the client. Employees are required to maintain 6 feet of distance from their client as much as possible.

If an employee becomes sick at work, they must leave the client's home immediately. The sick employee must report their symptoms/illness, as required above, and follow MDH quarantine guidelines (listed below).

MHP employees have been informed of these protocols through regular correspondence since March 2020.

Client Health Screening

MHPs will screen each client via a phone call or text before going to their their scheduled visit using pre-approved screening questions to determine symptoms or illness that may be related to COVID-19.

- If a client answers "yes" to any of the screening questions the MHP is expected to reschedule the visit, notify the DONs, and add a collateral note to the client's file.

Returning to Work after Exposure or Potential Exposure

Employees must stay home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. The employee will be permitted to return to work following the conditions that have been set forth per the document, [COVID-19 Recommendations for Health Care Workers \(state.mn.us\)](https://www.state.mn.us/health/covid19/recommendations-for-health-care-workers) which states the following:

IF YOU HAVE NO SYMPTOMS:

- If the exposed employee and/or household member does not show symptoms of COVID-19 ten (10) days after exposure, they can return on the 11th day, or seven (7) days after receiving a negative COVID-19 test; however the test needs to be performed on day 5 or later from the exposure date.
- At least 24 hours have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications **AND** improvement in symptoms.
- Practice of diligent hand hygiene and wearing a medical-grade facemask at all times until 14 days after illness onset.

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS:

- If an exposed employee and/or household member develops symptoms of COVID-19, they are required to quarantine for fourteen (14) days if no COVID-19 test is taken. If they receive a positive COVID-19 test, they are required to quarantine ten (10) days from onset of symptoms; if asymptomatic, they are required to quarantine ten (10) days from the date of the positive COVID-19 test.
- When you live with someone who has COVID-19, you should quarantine during the time they might be contagious (their isolation period), as well as the time you could develop COVID-19. **This may mean you need to quarantine for 24 days or more.** Your 14-day

quarantine period starts the day **after** the last person you live with completes their isolation period. This is usually:

- 10 days from the day their symptoms started.
 - If they didn't have symptoms, 10 days from the day they got tested.
 - Follow the recommendations of your local public health department if you need to quarantine. Options they will consider include stopping quarantine:
 - After day 10 without testing
 - After day 7 after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later)
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- Employees who are severely immunocompromised but remain asymptomatic throughout their infection should be excluded from work for 20 days following specimen collection.
 - Continue to watch for symptoms through day 14 after exposure, even if the quarantine was shortened.

Who does not need to quarantine?

If you have recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days and have close contact with someone with COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine if ALL of the following are true:

- Your illness was confirmed with a positive lab test in the past 90 days.
- You have fully recovered.
- You do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19.

Vaccination

If someone has completed COVID-19 vaccination (two doses in a two-dose series or one dose in a one-dose series) and is exposed, they do not need to quarantine if ALL of the following are true:

- The COVID-19 exposure was at least 14 days after their vaccination series was fully completed.
- The COVID-19 exposure was within 90 days of their final dose of the vaccination series.
- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19.
- MDH recommends testing three to five days after exposure, even if they do not have symptoms.

Regarding vaccination status, if an employee has already started the process of vaccination, we encourage them to complete all doses. If the employee has proof of vaccination, we would still like to have a copy for our records. We do not know what the future will look like for any mandates or other vaccination efforts so it is prudent to prepare for the possibility that it may be required again. All employees will be kept up to date in a timely manner regarding on-going vaccination mandates, updates, or changes.

If you have not yet received a vaccination, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** still recommends that you do so:

“COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting people from COVID-19 and help keep adults and children from getting seriously sick. COVID-19 vaccines can reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Getting everyone ages 5 years and older vaccinated can help the entire family, including siblings who are not eligible for vaccination and family members who may be at risk of getting very sick if they are infected.

Adults and children 5 years and older who are fully vaccinated can resume activities that they did before the pandemic. Learn more about what people can do [when they have been fully vaccinated](#). Studies show that COVID-19 vaccines are effective, especially at keeping adults and children from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19. Learn more about the [benefits of getting vaccinated](#). COVID-19 vaccines teach our immune system how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. It typically takes 2 weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19.”

Leave Policy

Leave policies promote employees staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household.

- Per FMLA, Alliance will provide up to twelve (12) weeks unpaid leave to eligible employees for a variety of reasons related to family and medical care in accordance with state and federal law requirements. Eligible employees are those who have worked for the company at least twelve (12) months and worked 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the start of the leave.
 - Should an employee not qualify for FMLA, the Benefits Coordinator and Director will work with them regarding a reasonable accommodation and/or leave when needed to ensure that the employee is able to stay home without worry when ill.
- Alliance MHP employees working 35+ hours a week are eligible to accrue both PTO and Vacation time. Employees are encouraged to use this time, when needed.
 - Employees who have exhausted or are not eligible for PTO or Vacation will be permitted to take time off, unpaid, when needed.
- MHP employees have been encouraged to reach out to their Director with any concerns or accommodation requests to ensure they feel safe and comfortable while working.

Exposure Notification Policy

Alliance has implemented a policy for informing employees if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time.

- Exposed employees will be notified immediately via phone/email by their supervisor if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at work.
- The identity of the individual with positive COVID-19 will not be released.
- Exposed employees will be sent home to work remotely (if possible) and be required to quarantine as outlined above in the “Return to Work After Exposure or Potential Exposure” section.

Privacy of Worker Health Status

An employee’s health status and health information is considered private and will be protected by Alliance.

- All employee health information is protected, kept confidential, and not released. Only the Director of Nursing who received the report will be privy to the name of the employee with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms.
- Any information regarding an employee's health information will be stored outside of the employees personnel file in a locked and secured area.

CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS, VISITORS:

Visitors at the Office

Alliance’s corporate office has opened back up to its customers, clients, and visitors. However, there are only a small handful of employees who continue to work in the building on a daily basis with all other employees working from home remotely. For this reason, it is still recommended to customers, clients, and visitors that all communication with/by our office employees occur through phone, email, or video. Please refer to “Protections and Protocols for Administrative Employees” to review requirements for visitors and clients that may enter the building.

Client’s Homes

While we cannot control who the client permits to enter their home, MHP employees are advised to discourage the client from entertaining any visitors during their work visit. If the MHP is uncomfortable or feel that their health or safety is in jeopardy when in the client’s home, the MHP may leave the visit and notify Alliance of the situation.

SOCIAL DISTANCING:

MHPs employees and their clients must wear fabric masks at all times and maintain social distancing of 6 feet. Alliance has made masks available to both MHPs and clients if they report they do not have one. Additionally, whenever possible interactions with client should be conducted outside, as weather permits.

MHP employees continue to work remotely as much as possible, but are allowed in the office as needed. Employees have been encouraged to stagger their work times in office so as to avoid too many employees in one area. Employees should remain 6 or more feet apart in their own, private, workspaces to ensure social distancing and sanitize their own workstations. Any MHP employee coming to work in the office must familiarize themselves with the “Protections and Protocols for Administrative Employees” and follow those protocols while working in the office.

HYGIENE AND SOURCE CONTROL:

Basic infection prevention measures and universal precautions are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Alliance does not have direct control over clients’ homes or the individuals living in those homes, however employees are expected to practice good hygiene, wear appropriate PPE, and implement source control measures during their visits when working with their clients.

If the client is sick or showing symptoms, MHP employees should follow directives in the “Client Health Screening” section above and notify Alliance immediately. Employees who are concerned about their own health and safety while in their client’s home should contact Alliance and/or their supervisor immediately to discuss the situation.

Hygiene

All employees and any permitted visitors entering the office building are instructed and required to wash or sanitize their hands immediately upon entering the building and before they leave the building. Employees are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the visit, but especially at the beginning and end of their visit, prior to and after any mealtimes, and after using the restroom.

- Signage is posted in all office restrooms with detailed instructions on how to thoroughly and properly wash hands.
- Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are at Alliance’s main entrance and locations throughout the workplace so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.
- Employees will be encouraged throughout the visit to wash and/or disinfect hands and will be allowed proper time in the day to accomplish this infection control protocol.

Client’s Homes

All employees are instructed and required to wash or sanitize their hands immediately upon entering the client’s home and before they leave. Employees are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout their visit, but especially at the beginning and end of their visit, prior to and after any mealtimes, and after using the restroom.

- Alliance provides hygiene/handwashing supplies, as well as PPE via our medical supply distributors or other vendors as items are available.

- The Directors of Nursing are responsible for keeping up to date with current supply levels and making sure all field employees are supplied with adequate PPE and sanitization products.
- Employees and clients have been reminded to avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- MHP employees should be encouraging their clients to practice the same hygiene methods for themselves and to reiterate the importance of these practices on a regular basis to ensure health and safety for all.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/Face Masks

Fully vaccinated employees and visitors are not required to wear face masks while in the building. Employees and visitors who are not fully vaccinated have been recommended to continue to wear a mask while in the building, and this reminder is posted at the main entrance. Employees must wear their cloth face mask when providing in-home services to a client.

- Employees are expected to provide their own cloth face masks but will be provided with a cloth face mask by Alliance if they are unable to obtain their own. It is the responsibility of the mask's owner to wash/sanitize their own cloth mask according to CDC instructions.
- Clients' homes are considered part of our indoor business. Cloth face masks should be worn at all times when in the client's home for employee and client safety.

Client's have been requested to wear cloth masks during any in-home visits, however we cannot mandate this in the client's own home. If the client does not have a cloth face mask Alliance can provide a face mask, as defined by the CDC, if requested.

- For MHP visits, if a client is sick or showing symptoms, the MHP should reschedule the visit, add a collateral note to the client's file, and notify Alliance immediately.

Source Controls

- Employees are instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing (even when wearing a mask), and to avoid touching their face, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands.
- Doors to access the bathrooms have been equipped with a touch free toe-pull and toe-kicks to allow a touch-free entrance/exit.
- Hand towel dispensers have been replaced with touchless models.
- Touchless trash receptacles are located in each bathroom and other communal areas to ensure sanitary measures may be met.
- Employees are expected to dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward.

- Respiratory etiquette is demonstrated on posters and signage and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all employees and any other persons who may be permitted to enter the workplace. Additionally, training on respiratory etiquette has been communicated via email memos to staff.
- Employees are expected to keep their food individualized and not share any food or drinks.
- Employees are expected to keep their food individualized and not share any food or drinks with clients or other members of the client's household.

BUILDING SYSTEMS AND VENTILATION

Please refer to the "Protections and Protocols for Administrative Employees" for information regarding the corporate office building systems and ventilation.

Client's Homes

Alliance does not have control over a client's home or ventilation system. Employees are instead required to wear proper PPE and follow social distancing protocol. When possible and appropriate, employees may encourage clients to open their windows, or complete a portion of their visit outdoors (ie. in the backyard, or going for a walk) to increase exposure to fresh air, as weather permits.

ACCESS AND ASSIGNMENT

New client intakes are communicated by the Treatment Director to the MHP staff via email. Employees coordinate cancelled or rearranged visits if necessary due to symptomatic or positive COVID-19 clients.

CLEANING, SANITIZING, and DISINFECTING

If working in office, MHP's are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the "Protections and Protocols for Administrative Employees" for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting their work spaces or shared supplies.

Client's Homes

Again, Alliance does not have control over a client's home environment, however memos have been sent out to clients and/or their responsible parties with information regarding the importance of keeping a clean and sanitized environment for the safety of themselves and their staff.

MHP employees should contact Alliance if they have questions or concerns regarding the safety of their work environment.

MAIL, PPE DISTRIBUTION, and TIMECARDS

Mail and Package Service

Alliance's office is currently open to the public and for allowing drop-off and pick-up for mail and packages. Delivery/mail personnel will be allowed to enter, and then asked to drop-off and/or pick-up mail/deliveries at the far end of the reception counter while maintaining a distance of 6 feet or more from the receptionist. Once the delivery person leaves, our receptionist sanitizes the surface and distributes the mail/packages as appropriate.

Alliance utilizes the loading dock to allow for larger deliveries ensuring social distancing protocol is still maintained.

Distribution of PPE

Alliance can provide PPE supplies to MHP employees, as requested, for pick up or mailing from our corporate office. Social distancing practices always apply. MHP employees are expected to follow the "Protections and Protocols for Administrative Employees" and follow those protocols while present in the office.

Timecards

Alliance no longer accepts timecards via drop off at the office. Employees should submit timecards in one of the following ways:

FAX: 651-895-8070

EMAIL: Payroll@alliancehealthcare.com

MAIL: 2260 Cliff Road
Eagan, MN 55122
Attn: Payroll Department

Employment Applications

Alliance no longer accepts employment applications via drop off at the office. Employees should submit employment applications in one of the following ways:

FAX: 651-895-8070

EMAIL: HR@alliancehealthcare.com

MAIL: 2260 Cliff Road
Eagan, MN 55122
Attn: HR Department