

## **Protections and Protocols for: PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANTS (PCA) - CHOICE AND TRADITIONAL, and HOMEMAKERS**

PCAs and Homemakers continue to provide essential caregiving services to their clients face-to-face in their clients' homes. These services are not able to be conducted remotely. PCA and Homemaking services are provided while optimizing PPE and other standard precautions as outlined below to ensure the health and safety of the clients and the employees who provide their services.

### **HANDLING SICK EMPLOYEES**

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

#### **Health Screening/Self-Monitoring/Reporting Policy**

Before coming to work and/or entering a client's home, employees are required to take their temperature 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

Employees who have self-monitored from home and are symptom free, are to don a cloth face mask before entering their client's home and wash 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, except when providing necessary personal care.

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

If a PCA or Homemaker's client is sick or showing symptoms, the PCA or Homemaker should reschedule the visit and notify Alliance immediately.

PCA and Homemaker employees have been informed of these protocols through regular correspondence since March 2020.

### **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. An employee will be permitted to return to work following the conditions that have been set forth per the [Minnesota Department of Health-COVID-19 and When to Return to Work Guidelines](#), which states the following:

- 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 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.

### **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.

### **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 will work with them regarding reasonable accommodation and/or leave when needed to ensure that the employee is able to stay home without worry when ill.
- Alliance PCA Choice employees are eligible to accrue PTO time through the SEI Union based on hours worked. These employees are encouraged to use this time, when needed.
- Employees who have exhausted or are not eligible for PTO will be permitted to take time off, unpaid, when needed.
- PCA and Homemaker employees have been encouraged to reach out to Alliance with any concerns or accommodation requests to ensure they feel safe and comfortable while working.

### **Exposure Notification**

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 and will be required to quarantine as outlined above in the “Return to Work After Exposure or Potential Exposure” section.

### **Privacy of Worker Health Status**

An employees’ 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 employee’s personnel file in a locked and secured area.

## VISITORS and CLIENTS

### **Visitors at the Office**

Alliance's corporate office is currently operating remotely and closed to our customer, clients, and visitors. All communication with/by our administrative employees occurs through phone, email, or video to ensure the health and safety of our employees, customers, clients, and visitors. PCAs, Homemakers, and other field staff are not allowed to enter the building at any time.

### **Client's Homes**

While we cannot control who the client permits to enter their home, PCAs and Homemakers are advised to discourage the client from entertaining any visitors during their work shift. If the PCA or Homemaker is uncomfortable or feels that their health or safety is in jeopardy when in the client's home, the PCA or Homemaker may leave the shift and notify Alliance of the situation.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

PCA and Homemaker employees should maintain a social distance of 6 feet from their client and others in the client's household as often as possible, except when providing personal care. PCAs and Homemakers should follow any other client-specific infection control guidelines as directed by the care plan and the supervising Registered Nurse/Qualified Professional.

As mentioned above, Alliance's corporate office is currently operating remotely and closed to the general public to enhance social distancing protocols. PCAs, Homemakers, and any other field staff are not allowed to enter the building at any time. See "Mail, PPE Distribution, and Timecards" section for more information about how this affects PCAs and Homemakers.

## HYGIENE, PPE, 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 shifts when working with their clients.

If the client is sick or showing symptoms, the PCA or Homemaker should reschedule the visit 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 supervising RN/Qualified Professional immediately to discuss the situation.

### **Hygiene**

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 day/shift, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to and after any mealtimes, and after using the restroom.

PCAs and Homemakers 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**

Employees are required to wear a cloth face mask that covers their mouth and nose in accordance with Executive Order 20-81. This Executive Order requires everyone—including employees—to wear a cloth face mask in indoor businesses and indoor public spaces. Clients' homes are considered part of our indoor business, therefore PCAs and Homemakers must wear a cloth face mask when entering a client's home and for the duration of their shift. PCAs and Homemakers may request that a client wear a cloth face mask during their shift if possible, however we cannot require that client's wear a cloth face mask in their own homes. If the client is sick or showing symptoms, the PCA or Homemaker should reschedule the visit and notify Alliance immediately.

- Employees are expected to provide their own cloth face masks but will be provided with a one by Alliance if they are unable to obtain their own.
- Alliance reviewed all PCA and homemaking clients' care plans and determined that those employees who are providing close contact complex cares to their clients should also receive face masks, as defined by the CDC, to be used in conjunction with their cloth face masks. Employees who have been directed to wear a face mask, as defined by the CDC, should continue to do so. These face masks, as defined by the CDC, are provided by Alliance and should be picked up at the Eagan office by appointment, or may be mailed out on a bi-weekly basis (see "Mail, PPE Distribution, and Timecards" Section For More Information).
- This Executive Order includes exemptions for people who are unable to wear or tolerate a face covering due to medical or mental health conditions or other reasons—such as when wearing a face covering would create a job hazard. There are also situations in which a face covering may be temporarily removed. More information about face covering requirements and exemptions is available on the MDH website at Facemasks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Webpage (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html#masks>). PCAs and Homemakers must contact Alliance if they feel that this exemption may apply to them.

### **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.
- Employees are expected to dispose of tissues in proper trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward.

- 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 with clients or other members of the client's household.

### WORKPLACE VENTILATION

Alliance does not have control over a client's home or ventilation system. PCAs and Homemakers are instead required to wear a face mask and follow proper social distancing protocol. When possible and appropriate, PCAs and Homemakers 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.

### ACCESS AND ASSIGNMENT

New client intakes are communicated by the intake coordinator to the QDDS or nurse via email.

#### **PCA Choice**

- All PCA Choice assignments/schedules are managed independently for PCA Choice employees by the client and/or responsible party.
- It is the responsibility of the client and/or responsible party to cancel or reschedule shifts due to COVID-19 symptoms or positive diagnosis.

#### **PCA Traditional**

- All PCA Traditional assignments/schedules are managed by the staffing coordinator and are communicated via email or phone.
- PCA Traditional employees and the staffing coordinator can coordinate cancelled/rescheduled shifts due to COVID-19 symptoms or positive diagnosis.

#### **Homemaking**

- All Homemakers assignments/schedules are managed by the staffing coordinator and are communicated via email or phone.
- Homemaker employees and the staffing coordinator can coordinate cancelled/rescheduled shifts due to COVID-19 symptoms or positive diagnosis

### CLEANING, SANITIZING, AND DISINFECTING

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. PCAs and Homemakers are expected to assist with this protocol when working with their clients (ie. disinfecting kitchen areas before and after meal prep, and cleaning/sanitizing all areas that they touched during their shift before leaving, etc).

PCAs and Homemakers 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 closed to the public but we do allow drop off and pick-up for mail and packages. Employees may continue to send correspondence to Alliance via mail if they are unable to email or fax.

### **Distribution of PPE**

Alliance provides PPE to select field employees for pick up at our office building.

- Field employees are required to schedule an appointment and call upon their arrival.
- Field employees are not allowed to enter the building.
- To ensure a no-contact pick up, the receptionist will set PPEs outside of the building when the field employee arrives.

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:HR@alliancehealthcare.com)

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