

Illinois Provider Agency Response to COVID-19

3/18/20

Background

The Institute, IARF and The Arc of Illinois administered an online survey targeted to Illinois I/DD and Mental Health community provider organizations. The survey sought input from community provider organizations regarding questions/concerns/actions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was open for a 24-hour period in the interest of obtaining immediate input in a rapidly changing environment. The results generated by the survey are being shared with state agency personnel as a means of further informing the proactive steps and communication they've undertaken so far, as well as community provider organizations to assist them in evaluating current and potential response strategies.

Results

59 provider organizations from across Illinois completed the survey. These organizations include the following service lines and census'.

Residential Services		Community Day Services	
CILA	6,897	Lives with Family	3,199
ICFDD	1,457	CILA	4,774
Mental Health Residential	131	ICFDD	1,975
Supportive Housing	1,325	SODC	104

Respondents were asked to comment on steps taken thus far, and steps they are considering taking in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working to further distill the data to better interpret preliminary findings; for example, many respondents don't offer mental health services, and several were CDS-only, so the percentage of respondents to below items may be greater than appears below. In the interest of sharing preliminary findings we're moving forward with below findings with further details forthcoming.

	Taken	Considering
Asking families to take a family member in residential services home	7	22
Eliminate community activities	59	
Required furlough for staff based on travel, contacts and/or symptoms	25	22
Closed or restricted delivery of therapy services	25	9
Closed or restricted drop-in/living room centers	17	5
Relocating people in residential settings to another agency site	0	19
Increasing CILA size beyond licensed capacity	0	8

Note: NA or no response accounts for total N<59

17 organizations reported experiencing staff call-offs due to reported symptoms associated with COVID-19. 37 organizations indicated they would be unable to support a client who tested positive for COVID-19 in an agency residential setting due to staffing constraints and ability to isolate. This represents 67% of residential provider respondents to the survey

A key concern among provider organizations is an adequate supply and access to items essential to client and staff safety. Responses that follow summarize current and anticipated inventories of key items.

	Adequate	Adequate but a near-future concern	Inadequate
Thermometers	22	13	16 (27%)
Face Masks	5	13	33 (56%)
Gloves	20	25	8 (14%)
Hand Sanitizers	7	27	20 (34%)
Cleaning Supplies	30	20	4 (7%)
Food	36	14	
Medicine	40	10	

Additional comments regarding supply adequacy included the following items: paper products; personal care items and gowns. The well-publicized shortage of key household items is a very real challenge for many CILA settings, 63% of which have 6+ residents plus staff who are consuming supplies. The stockpiling of items we're hearing about in the media is more typical of the usual amount of supplies needed in a group home setting.

Respondents were asked to identify topics where further guidance/direction from the state would be helpful. The most prominent areas included:

- DHS emergency plan should operations within a community agency become untenable
- Clarification regarding restrictions on family visits (many organizations have already initiated but some have experienced resistance; this is likely waning as the situation evolves)
- Impact of expanded sick leave provisions on community organizations and staff
- Guidance on relaxation of rules, regulations and training requirements. Specific to training requirements, requested considerations include:
 - Reduced mandatory DSP training components to expedite new hires
 - Amended medication administration training and authorization
 - Acknowledging expired CPR/First Aid certification in light of ARC training suspension
- CDS billing parameters
- Targeted supports for high risk populations

Provider organizations in both survey comments and in other formats have expressed appreciation for the proactive approach that IDHS and HFS have taken in anticipating and addressing provider organization concerns and challenges. We hope this information further informs continued decision-making and communication in a rapidly evolving environment.