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July 31, 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

In March, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) issued an immediate temporary suspension of day services, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included Summit's Success Through Engagement and Positive Supports (S.T.E.P.S.) program.

As you may know, OPWDD issued guidance on July 10, 2020, indicating that day services may resume operation during the continued COVID-19 public health emergency. We are carefully reviewing the many restrictions and changes indicated in the guidance to best prepare to resume operations in accordance with the Governor Cuomo's NY Forward initiative.

Many individuals who attend S.T.E.P.S. are in a "high-risk" category and require regular close contact with staff members. Therefore, we are planning carefully to provide an environment that meets the requirements that could prevent the spread of COVID-19 among individuals and staff.

The health and safety of your child and our staff is our highest priority. We are preparing to operate with all the required safety precautions in place. In order to adhere to the guidelines, many changes will be necessary.

The schedule and structure you and your child are accustomed to will be very different; the *traditional program days and hours will change.* For example, we will need to shorten program hours and stagger program times to 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. or 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., depending on location. At this time, virtual services will still be provided for those who will not be attending our on-site program.

We will bring individuals back to S.T.E.P.S. using a phased approach; everyone will not return simultaneously.

When in-person services resume, we want you to make an informed decision about sending your child to S.T.E.P.S. **Please note that virtual services will be available if you choose to keep your child at home and this will not jeopardize your child's placement.**

What to expect if your child returns to S.T.E.P.S.:

- ***Things may change quickly with limited notice.*** Summit is guided by external groups so our practices may be altered frequently as guidance is received from OPWDD and the New York State Department of Health. A quick return to virtual services may occur if our region experiences a spike in COVID-19 cases or if a COVID-19 case is identified at the location where your child is served.
- ***You will be expected to screen your child before sending them to program each day and keep them home if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness.*** An additional screening will occur upon pick-up/arrival. You will also be expected to immediately pick up your child if they experience COVID-19

symptoms while at program. Summit staff will also be screened at Summit every day and will be sent home as required if they do not pass our wellness screening.

- ***If symptoms occur during the day, we will keep your child in a separate area with a staff member until you arrive to pick them up. We expect that you will do this as promptly as possible.***
- ***Summit will provide transportation and must meet the associated social distancing requirements. To do this, we may be required to stagger transportation schedules. Parents are encouraged to transport, if possible. Staff will be on-site at the STEPS location for parents who choose to transport. Depending on program location, parents may drop off at 9 a.m. and pick up by 2 p.m. OR 9:30 a.m. and pick up by 2:30 p.m.***
- If Summit transports your child, we will contact you with health screening questions and take their temperature before they can get in the van.
- Staff will be expected to wear face coverings when working with your child and additional personal protective equipment will be provided as needed.
- ***Your child will be required to wear a face covering unless they are medically unable to do so and will be expected to tolerate staff who wear face coverings.***
- ***Your child will be required to wash their hands multiple times per day, including immediately upon arrival to program, and use hand sanitizer – which will be provided.***
- ***Your child will spend most of their time inside an individual program room. Additional areas will be designated for outdoor activities.***
- ***For now, your child will not have access to a refrigerator or microwave. We ask that your child bring a packed lunch that does not require refrigeration or re-heating.***
- Initially, we will not offer community outings; they will resume when we feel we can do so in the safest way possible.
- We will make every attempt to place your child with the same staff member each day.
- ***Program space will look different.*** Markings on the floor will designate individual areas. Individuals will have their own supplies that will not be shared. All unnecessary materials, and any materials that cannot be easily cleaned, will be removed from the program space.
- We will make every effort to help individuals maintain social distance from each other, but this will not always be possible by every participant.
- Initially, much of your child's day will be spent reacquainting themselves with our staff – and each other - and acclimating to changes in the daily routine and program structure.
- We ask that if you are not doing so already, that you work on critical skills including wearing a mask, washing hands, tolerating others' wearing masks, maintaining social distance, etc. Lessons that require very close contact or exposure to bodily fluids will not be run by the program staff (e.g., toothbrushing).

- If your child has a behavior plan, it will be adjusted to reflect a “hands-off” approach, to the extent possible, in order to reduce extended physical contact time between your child and staff members.
- ***Visitors, including parents, will not be allowed in the building except in extraordinary circumstances. For those who drive their child to program, new arrival and dismissal procedures will be established. In community settings, we are working closely with our hosts to ensure that our interactions with others are strictly limited.***
- Summit will implement and document enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures with a focus on cleaning frequently touched surfaces.

Based on these changes, we ask that you complete and return the enclosed Informed Consent no later than August 5, 2020. Your responses will help us tremendously as we work through critical details.

Thank you for your continued support. We will keep you updated as we receive additional information. If you have any questions, please contact Benjamin Goldberg, Coordinator of Adult Services, at bgoldberg@TheSummitCenter.

Sincerely,

Diana Schmit

Diana M. Schmit, MS
Vice President, Community and Adult Services

Summit Informed Consent for Resumption of Day Services

I have read the Resumption of Day Services letter dated July 31, 2020 and understand the information. After considering all the information provided:

Please check one:

I plan to send my child to STEPS if in-person services are available.

I *do not* plan to send my child to STEPS and prefer virtual services instead

I am requesting a mix of in-person and virtual services

Please check one:

I plan to transport my child to Summit STEPS

My child will take Summit-provided transportation.

Child's Name: _____

Program location: _____

Print Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____