



Monday, March 16, 2020

Dear Families of Children in our Care,

These days, there is a lot of anxiety around the novel coronavirus and the illness it causes, COVID-19. We are taking this situation very **seriously** and we are preparing for any occurrence on our residential campuses and in our other programs. We are following the directives of Louisiana Department of Health.

In light of the current public health concerns, the physical health of our residents and the physical health of our employees are at the forefront of our minds. We are closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19 in the world, our nation, our state, and in our Louisiana communities. We will keep you updated on our website at <http://www.LUMCFS.org/COVID-19> and by direct telephone communication when necessary.

Across Louisiana, public K-12 schools have been closed. Our three children's homes have effectively launched our routine Summer Program.

These are some of the measures we are taking to **minimize the spread** of the new coronavirus including following state and federal guidelines:

- We are following the guidance of Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- We implemented a "Visitor Restriction" required by LDH Office of Public Health. All "non-essential" visits are prohibited.
- We cancelled travel of staff throughout the state and abroad to minimize exposure.
- We cancelled all commercial travel.
- We are minimizing or canceling meetings on our campuses that involve outside parties or large groups.
- We are providing regular updates and training for our employees.
- We are educating youth through training on universal precautions, having custom made signs to remind them to wash their hands and other actions to keep from spreading germs. We are also distributing special comic books to educate them on COVID-19.
- As the situation develops, we are implementing and modifying plans for maintaining staff coverage, minimizing exposure of youth if someone has been exposed to the virus, training staff in how to assist youth that may become ill, etc.
- We are providing reassurance, prayer, and ongoing support for the youth in our care.

You, too, can **do your part** to slow the spread if you **take these actions**:

1. Practice "Social Distancing". Stay away from others as much as possible.

2. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - a. Right when you get home;
  - b. After touching objects that others have touched, like grocery baskets, door knobs, etc.;
  - c. After you sneeze, cough or blow your nose;
  - d. Before, during and after you prepare meals;
  - e. Before eating;
  - f. After using the restroom;
  - g. After caring for others.
3. Cover your face when you sneeze and cough – you may be sick and not know it. The virus can take up to 14 days to make someone outwardly sick.
  - a. Moisture from sneezes and coughs may contact others or the surfaces that others may touch.
  - b. Sneezes and coughs can sometimes spread moisture 10 feet away.
  - c. Ask others to cover their faces when they sneeze or cough.
4. Avoid touching your face.
  - a. The coronavirus may stick to your hands, but it gets into your body through your mucus membranes: eyes, nose, mouth, etc.
  - b. Try not to touch the faces of others for the same reasons.
5. Find another way to warmly greet others besides hugs and handshakes.
  - a. Others may inadvertently be carrying the virus on their skin or clothing.
  - b. You may inadvertently be carrying the virus on your skin or clothing.
  - c. Smiles and kind words are absolutely free from viruses!

In communities across Louisiana, local health, epidemiology, and emergency management experts are working to help all of us be safer as this coronavirus spreads through our state. Please **abide by the instructions you receive**. You may save the life of someone you know or love by slowing the spread of this virus.

**Be informed.** For solid information about the novel coronavirus and the COVID-19 illness, there are two authoritative sources for accurate information for us in Louisiana.

The first is the **Louisiana Department of Health's** website: <http://ldh.la.gov/coronavirus>

The second is the U.S. **Centers for Disease Control**. The CDC has a ton of information about COVID-19 AND it is organized for easy access. The URL is: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>

Sincerely,  
*Rick Wheat*  
President and CEO