



BARC Developmental Services

Executive Offices • 4950 York Road • P.O. Box 470 • Holicong, Pennsylvania 18928-0470

(215) 794-0800 • FAX (215) 794-0958

WEBSITE www.barcprograms.org • E-MAIL info@barcprograms.net

TO: Individuals, Family Members, Residential Providers

FROM: Scott Kulp, Director of Vocational Services

RE: Closure due to Community Spread

DATE: November 6th, 2020

It has been nearly seven months to the day since I sent my first memo to you about the coronavirus, and how it might impact the services we provide to the folks we support. Unfortunately, the pandemic still rages on, with the number of positive tests increasing throughout most of our country, and the world.

We recently received new guidelines from the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and the Department of Aging, two of our major funding sources, regarding community spread of the virus in Pennsylvania. They have identified three specific levels of community spread, as follows: Low (0-5%), Moderate (5-10%), and Substantial (10% or greater). Each Friday, both of these agencies send day program providers an email, which lists the percentage of community spread for each county in the commonwealth for that week. For the past two weeks we have received these emails, Bucks County has been classified as Low, and no action has been needed. There was an increase, however, in the percentage increase last week over the previous week's level, which is concerning. If the level moves to Substantial in Bucks County, day program providers are Strongly Encouraged to close their programs immediately to help ensure the safety and well-being of the individuals we serve. We have also been advised we should remain closed until Bucks County drops back to the Moderate level for two (2) consecutive weeks, which means we would likely be closed for a minimum of three (3) weeks from the day we learn Bucks County has moved to the Substantial level of community spread. Moreover, it may take longer for us to meet all the guidelines to re-open, and for you as a family member (or residential provider) to feel comfortable sending your family member back to our day programs.

As I mentioned earlier, we don't learn until Friday what the community spread percentage is for Bucks County. If it is Substantial, we are expected to close our day programs the following Monday, which means we only have a short time to respond, including letting you know we must close. Please know we will make every effort to notify you of our closing on the Friday

"To serve and advocate for people with intellectual disabilities and autism since 1951"

afternoon we learn we are expected to close. If we cannot speak to you directly, we will leave a message, or if we have your email address, we will send you an email notifying you we have to close. We will also post a closing notice on the home page of our website, which you can easily access at: www.barcprograms.org.

There is also the following link where you can access the rates of community spread in each county in Pennsylvania: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx>.

We are certainly hopeful the rate of community spread will remain at the Low or Moderate levels in Bucks County, and we will not need to close our programs, but we wanted you to know this will likely happen on a moment's notice. We appreciate your understanding of this most important concern, and urge you to do everything possible to follow the CDC guidelines to keep you and your family member safe and healthy. What we know is this, adults with an intellectual disability are not more vulnerable to contracting the virus than non-disabled adults, but they are nearly twice as likely to suffer ill effects if they do come down with COVID-19. We are all in this together, and need to be mindful of the importance of wearing masks, social distancing, and following all the other guidelines in place to reduce the potential for community spread. By doing so, we can help prevent Bucks County moving to the Substantial level.

Please feel free to contact your family member's Program Specialist should you have any questions. Please....be well, and stay healthy!