

## **COVID-19: EveryStep's Preparation, Prevention and Practices** *Revised 2/17/21*

On March 15, 2020, EveryStep implemented its emergency preparedness plan (EPP) in response to the growing COVID-19 pandemic. Following are specific steps EveryStep has taken, **as of Feb. 17, 2021**. EveryStep's top priority is the safety and health of its staff/volunteers, patients/clients and their family members, and the community. EveryStep relies on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Polk County Health Department. Please note: this is a working document and will be revised as needed. The most current version can be found at [www.everystep.org/about/covid19](http://www.everystep.org/about/covid19). For more information, call your EveryStep office or email [info@everystep.org](mailto:info@everystep.org).

- **ALL STAFF/VOLUNTEERS SCREENED DAILY:** All EveryStep staff and volunteers who are not self-isolating at home and are coming into a work location or completing home visits are required to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff are responsible to report any COVID-19 symptoms and self-isolate at home. Staff are not permitted to enter a work location and/or patient/client home until or unless they are fever- and symptom-free for at least 24 hours (without medication).
  - If staff have immediate family members who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and/or have a COVID-19 diagnosis while living in same dwelling, staff will need to self-isolate by staying home.
  - With limited exceptions, volunteer visits to patients/clients have been suspended until further notice. Volunteers are asked to follow the same protocols/practices as employees. Volunteers are provided the high risk factors for COVID-19 and are asked to self-select for high risk status.
  - All staff and volunteers working outside of their own homes are required to wear masks at all times while working and to practice social distancing. These practices are also required of staff and volunteers who have been vaccinated.
- **HIGH-RISK STAFF INDIVIDUALS:** All EveryStep staff are provided information about the risk factors for contracting COVID-19. Staff are asked to self-select and signal to supervisor if he/she is identifying with factors that are high risk (such as being 60 years of age or older and certain types of health conditions). Reasonable accommodations may be made for individuals who have signaled high risk status, in order to accomplish social distancing.
- **STAFF WHO SCREEN POSITIVE:** EveryStep staff and volunteers are required to promptly report to supervisor any COVID-19 symptoms and promptly initiate self-isolation at home for accomplishing safest form of social distancing. If a staff person has a fever and/or other COVID-19 symptoms, they can expect to be sent home immediately and should not enter a building location. The immediate supervisor is responsible for communicating promptly with his/her supervising senior leader and submitting a report using the infection control log. The infection control log is continuously monitored by staff in EveryStep's Quality Dept.
- **HOSPICE & HOME CARE VISITS:** Hospice and home care visits by EveryStep staff to patients/clients in their homes continue to be made; nurses and aides are equipped with PPE when caring for patients diagnosed with COVID-19. Screening all patients/clients and families for COVID-19 prior to going to the home is required for each admit and visit. If unable to reach patient prior to scheduled visit, staff will attend the visit but will screen at door before entering the home. If screening is positive for any individual in the home, staff may proceed with the visit if proper PPE is available; if not, the visit may be postponed until safety measures are in place and PPE is readily available. Staff will promptly report case to his/her supervisor, document any positive screening results, and submit information using the infection control log, which is continuously monitored by EveryStep's Quality Dept.



## COVID-19: EveryStep's Preparation, Prevention and Practices (cont'd.)

- **HOSPICE HOUSE CARE & ACCESS:** EveryStep provides 24/7 hospice care at its Kavanagh House on 56th Street in Des Moines, and its Greater Regional Hospice Home in Creston. If a patient exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, staff enact strict protocols to contain contagions and prevent their spread. Staff are fully trained and properly use personal protective equipment at all times. *Providing compassionate care to all who need us is core to EveryStep's non-profit mission and organizational values. EveryStep does not require patients to leave its facilities if they exhibit symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, post admission.* Visitors are allowed, but they must comply with current visitor protocols (see [everystep.org/about/covid19](http://everystep.org/about/covid19) for current hospice house visitor protocols).
- **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:** All EveryStep direct care staff must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) while within 6 feet of patients or family members who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or display flu-like symptoms. EveryStep also has built a contingency supply of "barrier" masks to utilize if needed, or upon request by the patient, family or care facility.
- **OTHER VISITS/APPOINTMENTS:** **Effective March 20, 2020, and excluding hospice, home care and Correctional Facilities 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial programs, all other in-person visits and office-based appointments conducted by EveryStep care & support programs have been suspended indefinitely,** including in-home visits as well as appointments held at EveryStep sites or other locations. Support is provided as possible via phone, telehealth technology or other means.
- **PUBLIC ACCESS TO EVERYSTEP LOCATIONS:** All EveryStep locations are open to the public. Arrangements have been made to ensure social distancing and precautions are practiced for prevention of COVID spread. Visitors to EveryStep locations must attest to being free of fever and other symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Visitors' temperatures will be taken upon arrival. EveryStep has also implemented visitor restrictions and guidelines at its hospice houses and EveryStep Giving Tree thrift store; see current practices at [everystep.org/about/covid19](http://everystep.org/about/covid19).
- **SERVICE GROUPS:** Many of EveryStep's group-based events have transitioned to offer online formats. Limited groups/events are offered in person with symptom screening, social distancing and mask protocols in place. Relevant education about EveryStep's pandemic protocols is provided to participants, and staff have access to educational teaching sheets for clients/patients and families.
- **INTERNAL STAFF MEETINGS:** Consideration for all scheduled internal face-to-face meetings that require more than 5 staff to gather together in one physical location will be reviewed by the meeting organizer for holding a virtual meeting and if necessary, making a cancellation. Use of virtual meeting tools is highly encouraged. If a leader determines an internal meeting will proceed face to face, practices for social distancing will be used requiring 6 feet physical separation and masks.
- **IDPH REPORTING:** EveryStep is a mandatory reporter under a public health order. If an individual staff/volunteer and/or patient/client tested by EveryStep tests positive for COVID-19, a designated staff liaison at EveryStep is responsible to report to IDPH.