



COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Access North Updated Plan Guidance-12/4/2023

Access North is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our workers, volunteers and consumers. To ensure we have as safe and healthy workplace, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Leadership and employees are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our employees, leadership and consumers. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our workers and workplaces.

Leadership and employees are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.

Our employees are one of our most important assets. We are serious about safety and health at Access North. Employee involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved our employees in this process by engaging with each other at monthly All-Staff meetings and weekly department meetings. Our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines, federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19 and Executive Order 20-48, and addresses:

- hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
- cleaning, disinfecting, decontamination and ventilation;
- prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- communications and instructions for consumers;
- communications and training that will be provided to all employees; and
- management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

Screening and policies for employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Employees have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following updated policies and procedures are being implemented to assess workers' health status prior to entering the workplace and for workers to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

- Employees have been instructed to report fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat or inability to taste or smell to their supervisor. **Employees should not report to work if experiencing these symptoms.** *If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.*
- If an employee has COVID-19 or recently been closely exposed to someone with COVID-19, the people who may have been in close contact (unmasked & within 6 feet for over 15 minutes) with that employee will be notified of possible exposure. Confidentiality of the individual will be maintained as much as possible.

If You Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)

- Stay home for 5 days and isolate from others.
 - If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are improving after 5 days, you can return to work and wear a mask for 10 days.
 - If you have a fever, continue to stay home until you are fever free for 24 hours.
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If You Were Exposed to Someone with COVID-19

- If you develop symptoms, stay home and take a test
 - If no symptoms and test negative, you may end your isolation
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- Since work schedules involve a hybrid strategy please be sure you are symptom-free before coming into the office.
- Lunch breaks can now be taken within the lunch room for all staff but it must be left in a clean and sanitary condition.
- Employees working directly with consumers can fully utilize office meeting spaces. Whenever directly working with consumers, masking preference of the consumer should be respected.
- All ramp, home modification and assistive technology installs should be planned with the homeowner and masking preferences of the consumer should be respected.

Office Visitor/Consumer Procedure

- Service consumers and job applicants can access the offices by appointment at any time between the working hours of 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.
- Offices are now open to walk-in traffic in Hibbing from 8:00 am to noon, in Duluth from noon to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. Staff are available to consumers at any time by phone or are available to make an appointment anytime Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30 pm.

Scheduling Appointments:

Access North offices will be open to consumers and others by appointment at any time throughout the week. Staff will check with consumers and follow their preferences for masking and social distancing.

Staff are responsible for scheduling all your appointments on the Google calendars for the appropriate room.

IL Coordinators and HCBS Case Managers will be responsible for scheduling appointments and following the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan: All PPE is stocked in the supply room in the Hibbing office. Hand sanitizer, surface sanitizer spray, paper towels, face masks (cloth and paper), face shields, gloves, alcohol wipes, and sanitizing wipes (when available). Management staff from other offices are responsible to stock their offices with needed supplies. All Access North staff should inform consumers that all mask wearing is optional and should follow consumer requests, use hand sanitizer, wash hands and follow proper procedures as listed in the plan. Please review expectations with the consumer when scheduling appointments. This way, everyone will be on the same page upon arrival:

- Provide the person with a number to the office or your cell phone and be ready to meet them at the front door if doors are locked (outside of new office hours).
- Confirm that they are feeling well.

Once the above has been completed they may enter the building and go straight to the scheduled meeting room. The meeting room must be properly cleaned after all appointments, this will be the responsibility of the person who scheduled the appointment. Please leave the room in a clean and sanitary condition.

Consumer computers will be available to use by appointment only.

Leave Guidelines

Access North has implemented leave policies that promote workers staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household.

The FMLA entitles eligible employees to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to:

Twelve work weeks of leave in a 12-month period for:

- the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
- the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
- to care for the employee’s spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
- any qualifying emergency arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on “covered active duty;” or
- twenty-six work weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin to the employee (military caregiver leave).

The employee may be required to provide a physician statement and a request for leave of absence if they miss more than three consecutive days of work.

Accommodations for workers with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions have been implemented (see ESST and Federal Cares Act guidance).

Paid Time Off (PTO) is available for eligible employees according to your employment handbook or policy.

City of Duluth Earned Sick and Safe Time – This paid time off is earned by employees whenever they work in city limits of Duluth. For every 50 hours worked, employees earn one hour of paid leave to use for:

- Caring for themselves or a family member due to a physical or mental health condition or illness
- Attending a doctor’s appointment or seeking preventative care
- Caring for themselves, a family member, or a roommate for reasons related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Handwashing

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Employees are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes and after using the restroom. All visitors to the workplace will be required to wash or sanitize their hands immediately upon entering the facility. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are at entrances and locations in the workplace so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

Employees and visitors are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all workers, customers and visitors. Infection Control guidelines will be posted in the lobby areas of each office location.

Cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation

Every employee will share in the responsibility of office cleanliness and sanitization. Immediately upon the use of a conference room, break room, etc., each employee will have the responsibility to clean the area thoroughly. Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms and meeting rooms. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, railings, copy machines, etc.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfectant supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product. Surfaces that must be sanitized will be sprayed and wiped off with a paper towel. Gloves should be worn when sanitizing any area and disposed of on completion of the process. Management staff from other offices can obtain all sanitizing products from the Hibbing supply room and are responsible to stock their offices with the needed supplies.

Communications and training

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was provided to all employees and training was provided. Additional communication and training will be ongoing and provided to all workers who did not receive the initial training. Instructions will be communicated to customers and visitors. Employees, consumers and volunteers will also be advised not to enter the workplace if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19. The Leadership Team will monitor how effective the program has been implemented. Leadership and employees are to work through this new program together and update the training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by the Leadership Team and is posted throughout the workplace. It will be updated as necessary.

Certified by:

Donald Brunette/Executive Director