



**A Message from Advocates Chief Medical Director, Dr. Mark Viron,
and President & CEO, Diane Gould:**

Dear Families,

Thank you so much for your understanding and support as we manage our way through these unprecedented times. The COVID-19 crisis has asked a lot of us all, and the burdens on families and caregivers are at the forefront of our minds.

Please be assured that we are taking every possible precaution to minimize the impact of this crisis on your loved ones and the staff who care for them. We are fortunate to have an amazing team of nurses who are actively supporting our direct care staff and the people we serve in all our programs. We are implementing the latest infection control and prevention guidance from the CDC, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and local boards of health.

This gets harder by the day. As of today, there are 30 staff and 21 people we support diagnosed with COVID-19 at Advocates. If your family member is among those or has had any contact, you have been notified. There are 14 residential programs that are quarantined. Unfortunately, we have lost three more members of the Advocates community to COVID-19 - two people served in our Adult Family Care program and one staff member. Our deepest condolences go out to their families and to the staff who worked with them for years.

We are screening staff and the people we serve daily for symptoms and have protocols in place to respond quickly to any signs of infection. In all our policies and

protocols, we continue to err on the side of caution to prevent and control the spread of infection.

We continue to advocate aggressively and successfully at the state level for assistance ensuring adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and timely, accessible testing for those who need it.

Just this week we received shipments of PPE and supplies, such as 60,000 medical masks and 1,000 bottles of hand sanitizer to help protect your family members. In partnership with DMH and DDS, we are now able to conduct COVID-19 mobile testing on-site in our residential programs.

Again, thank you. We couldn't do this without you. Please continue to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

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