

IDHS Ramps Up Infection Control Amid COVID-19 Outbreaks at Developmental Centers

December 10 2023 7:36 AM



SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Department of Human Services' (IDHS) State-Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) are amplifying COVID-19 testing and infection-prevention policies as a response to increased cases among residents and staff.

SODCs provide residential programs to people with intellectual/developmental disabilities who have severe medical and/or behavioral needs. IDHS operates seven developmental centers in the state.

Across the state, COVID-19 laboratory confirmed cases and COVID-19 related hospitalizations have increased by nearly 50% since early November, according to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.

As of December 6, there were 58 residents, out of approximately 1,650 total, and 35 staff, out of approximately 3,500 total, who have tested positive for COVID-19 since November 20, with nearly all presenting mild symptoms.

SODC staff have provided positive residents and patients with treatment, including antiviral medication as appropriate. Only one resident is hospitalized, and they are in stable condition.

SODCs continue to follow all infection prevention policies including quarantine as needed due to exposure, social distancing, masking in shared areas, and intensified cleaning and disinfection protocols. Increased testing during the outbreak has been established for residents and staff.

Communal dining, group activities, and non-essential outings have been reduced in impacted areas until the outbreak ends. Social services staff continue to provide leisure activities, in accordance with social distancing practices, to care for the psychosocial well-being of those served at SODCs. Visitation is allowed to continue, per U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. However, families have been notified of the outbreak status and advised that rescheduling visitation should be considered.

IDHS is following directives on infection prevention and control as outlined by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the CDC.

“IDPH has been working closely with our counterparts at IDHS facilities to monitor conditions, to offer strategies to contain any outbreaks, and to provide resources, direct consultations and assessments,” **said Dr. Hillary Spencer, leader of the IDPH Infection Prevention Team.**

“At IDHS we diligently protect the safety of residents and staff. We continue to take steps to reduce the spread from all infectious diseases,” **said Tonya Piephoff, IDHS Division Director of Developmental Disabilities.** “We are grateful to all of those who work at our centers and engage in protective measures to reduce the spread, as they continue to provide quality care to all those we serve.”