



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

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Achieve with us.

Scott Borchardt
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Statement from The Arc of Massachusetts on the Pandemic

Present Circumstances

We seriously fear the impact of the increasing cases of Covid-19 in our Commonwealth. Persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are dramatically more at risk, especially those in group settings. We are particularly concerned about asymptomatic carriers and the impact they can have on individuals living in all settings. We need a vaccine mandate.

The Commonwealth and providers of services have educated and vaccinated all those willing to accept the vaccine. Now with the FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine, further action is needed to slow infection rates.

The surveillance system established by the Commonwealth in partnership with providers of large and small congregate care settings has been effective in identifying both vaccinated and unvaccinated carriers of the virus. Additionally, other infection control efforts including wearing masks and using sanitizing products has helped control the spread.

Presently staff or other resources dedicated to the care of individuals are being *re-purposed* for surveillance and infection control as no additional funding for managing and implementing these activities has been allocated.

We urge the following recommendations be implemented:

1. The standard of care should be higher in our services system relative to other settings such as businesses and restaurants. We urge ADEQUATE funding to implement all recommendations in order to maintain surveillance and infection control. Also needed, administrative financial support to offset the CONSIDERABLE cost of implementation, coordination, and testing.
2. Continue the existing infection control protocols and align testing surveillance for day/work and outreach programs after consultation between the state and service providers. Consultation should result in a manageable, FUNDED program.
3. All parties should recognize the necessity and mutual responsibility of practicing mitigation (symptom monitoring, masking up in public places, social distancing, and timely testing, etc.)
4. It is now critically important that we REQUIRE vaccination for ALL our constituents and for those who provide care and support. We ask that all caregiving staff serving through agencies under the aegis of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services have a MANDATORY vaccine requirement. Exemptions for medical or religious reasons should be clearly defined through the Department of Public Health.
5. Provide funding to address our workforce crisis.

The Arc in Massachusetts Includes the Following Local Chapters:

Berkshire County • Bristol County • Brockton Area • CCI/LowerCape • Center of Hope Foundation • Charles River Center
Communitas, Inc. • Greater Haverhill-Newburyport • Incompass HS • Lifeworks • Minute Man • Northeast • Opportunities for Inclusion •
The Arc of Opportunity • Plymouth/UpperCape • South Shore • The United Arc