



Dear UCP Seguin Staff, Foster Parents, Families, and Friends,

When we last sent out a COVID update communication in mid-December, the Omicron surge had just begun. For over a month, this highly contagious variant of the COVID-19 virus swept across the nation, infecting hundreds of thousands of people including many who had been fully or partially vaccinated. At UCP Seguin, we were also impacted by this surge.

We are happy to report that the over 130 participants and staff who tested positive for the virus during this surge, including some of the most vulnerable individuals receiving support from UCP Seguin, experienced relatively mild symptoms or remained completely asymptomatic. Our proactive approaches and agile action related to the changing landscape of COVID, including but not limited to providing early and consistent access to testing and vaccines (including instituting a strict vaccine mandate), have resulted in creating the safest environments possible for our participants, their families, our workforce, and our contractors.

With the Omicron surge winding down, Illinois has ended its 5-month-long statewide mask mandate. Although it no longer officially requires masks to be worn, the state continues to strongly recommend mask use in public places, especially during indoor activities and events. Important to understand is that the requirement remains in place in environments where masks are federally mandated (including on public transit), health care facilities, congregate settings, long term care facilities, and daycare settings. Additionally, private businesses and municipalities may choose to implement their own masking requirements. **For the foreseeable future, and until we receive affirmative guidance from the Illinois Department of Human Services, UCP Seguin will continue to require masking to remain in compliance with the federal mandate.**

With test positivity rate down to 2% in the state and because our UCP Seguin community is vaccinated and many have received their COVID vaccine booster, our COVID Task Force/Impact Team recognizes that we need to begin loosening some of the restrictions we've had in place for the last two years.

**Effective immediately, all restrictions on outings and home visits are being lifted, although masking will still be required of our participants and staff when they are in the community on activities. Families are welcome to visit their loved ones in the homes but will need to continue to wear masks when indoors.**

**Also, effective immediately, testing will not be required and is not necessary for any person who is not experiencing COVID-like symptoms. Individuals who are seeking services and are vaccinated will not need to provide proof of a negative COVID diagnosis before doing trial visits in CILA homes or at community day services sites. The mantra continues to be "if you're sick, stay home."**

For the time being, UCP Seguin will continue taking temperatures of employees and potentially other visitors to our program sites. We are hopeful that we will be allowed to end this practice in the coming days and weeks which will likely be the case provided the positivity rate continues to decrease and more people are vaccinated.

With Spring just around the corner, so many of us are looking forward to having a normal season that includes getting together with family and friends. At this time, we are fortunate to have more protection against COVID than we have had at any other time since the pandemic began including anti-viral medications and monoclonal antibody treatments for those who become ill with the virus. While the treatments are effective, we cannot say strongly or often enough that vaccines and now booster shots are the most effective way to protect against serious disease.

As always, UCP Seguin continues to follow the science. We will continue to do so while also ensuring that we are following the requirements of the licensing, regulatory, and funding entities that support us to provide our essential services.

We express our heartfelt gratitude for your never-ending support, understanding, and assistance as we travel through the COVID "maze", hopeful that we will soon find our way out together!

With Warm Regards for a Bright and Healthy Spring Season,



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