

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Synstelien Community Services

**Synstelien Community Services** is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our workers, clients, staff, expanded support team members, guests and visitors. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, **Synstelien Community Services** has developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers and workers 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 workers and management. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our workplaces.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by **Jennifer Baker, CEO**, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, management and workers are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with, and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. **Synstelien Community Services'** managers and supervisors have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

Our workers are our most important assets. **Synstelien Community Services** is serious about safety and health and protecting its workers. Worker involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved our workers in this process by: Ongoing discussions with the Administrative COVID Team and subsequent communications throughout the company and with all stakeholders offering opportunities for questions and ideas to be thoughtfully considered and implemented according to guidelines provided by MDH, CDC, OSHA, and MNDHS.

**Synstelien Community Services's** COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the industry guidance developed by the State of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Minnesota OSHA) statutes, rules, and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders, and addresses:

- Ensuring sick workers stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- Social distancing – Workers must be at least six-feet apart;
- Worker hygiene and source controls;
- Workplace building and ventilation protocol;
- Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol;
- Drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol; and

- Communications and training practices and protocol.

**Synstelien Community Services** has reviewed and incorporated the industry guidance applicable to our business provided by the State of Minnesota for the development of this plan, including the following industry guidance **Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Department of Health**. Other conditions and circumstances included in the industry guidance and addressed in the plan that are specific to our business include:

additional protections and protocols for customers, clients, guests, visitors;  
additional protections and protocols for personal protective equipment (PPE);  
additional protections and protocol for access and assignment; additional  
protections and protocol for sanitation and hygiene; additional protections and  
protocols for work clothes and hand washing; additional protections and  
protocol for distancing and barriers; additional protections and protocols for  
managing occupancy; additional protocols to limit face-to-face interaction; and  
additional protections and protocols for certain types of businesses functions.

## **Ensure sick workers stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons**

Workers have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess workers' health status and for workers to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms. If symptoms present, staff are directed to notify the supervisor, not enter the premises, call the local Healthcare Provider and proceed to the local testing facility as directed. Each worker is supplied with an "Essential Worker" letter to present to the healthcare provider.

**Synstelien Community Services** 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. Accommodations for workers with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions are developed. **Family Care, PTO, and FMLA benefits have been implemented according to the guidelines found within the Synstelien Community Services Employee Handbook.**

**Synstelien Community Services** has also implemented a policy for informing workers if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. The policy includes notification by the supervisor directly to employee(s). The supervisor contacts the Human Resources Department. The Department works with the employee to navigate the appropriate leave. HR continues to follow up with the employee throughout quarantine until such time the employee is cleared to return to work.

In addition, a policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of workers' health status and health information. Staff have been informed of their HIPPA rights with regards to COVID19 notification, quarantine, and testing. Supervisors are instructed to speak with the affected employee directly and connect them with the HR Department immediately.

## **Social distancing – Unvaccinated workers must be at least six-feet apart**

Social distancing of at least six-feet will be implemented and maintained between workers, clients, visitors, and guests in the workplace for unvaccinated individuals and whenever deemed appropriate through the following engineering and administrative controls: Synstelien Community Services continues to follow the guidelines through MN DHS for group homes regarding visitors into the group homes. Unvaccinated individuals must wear masks while visiting. Unvaccinated workers must wear masks while on shift. Eye protection is also recommended. The Administrative Office is open to the public. Meetings rooms have been organized to facilitate safe social distancing. Masks can be worn if desired. Meetings can be conducted in person or virtual whenever necessary.

## **Worker hygiene and source controls**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Workers 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 **staff reporting** to the workplace are required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or 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. Source controls are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Supplies have been obtained and monitored by the Administrative COVID Team. The Administrative Office will maintain a supply of PPE and cleaning products available to houses.

Workers, clients, 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, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. Workers, clients, and visitors are expected to 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 and other persons entering the workplace. The Administrative COVID Team provides ongoing communications regarding situational updates and the most current recommendations received by MDH and DHS through email and company intranet.

## **Workplace building and ventilation protocol**

Operation of the building in which the workplace is located, includes necessary sanitation, assessment and maintenance of building systems including water, plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems. All residences are equipped with central air conditioning. All residences have had their furnace filters changed and duct systems checked in accordance with county licensing standards. The Administration Office has had their duct systems checked, air conditioners assessed and ventilation systems checked. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people.

## **Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol**

Regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting have been implemented, including a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, vehicles, and areas in the work environment including, but not limited to, restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, meeting rooms, checkout stations, fitting rooms, and drop-off and pick-up locations. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting is being conducted of high-touch areas including, but not limited to, phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, credit card readers, delivery equipment, etc. Each residence conducts regularly scheduled housecleaning according to the Housekeeping Checklist as implemented according to the guidelines for Residential Community Services under MN Statute 245D and Otter Tail County.

Residential food preparation and meals are conducted with non-sharing of utensils between clients, food prep areas are sanitized before and after each meal, seating is adjusted to conform to social distancing guidelines.

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. All residences and the Administrative Office follow the industry guidelines as provided by Otter Tail County, CDC, and MN DHS for obtaining cleaning supplies and PPE. The Administrative Office will maintain a supply of PPE and cleaning products available to houses.

## **Drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol**

The Administrative Office is open to the public, allowing for all deliveries, drop offs, and pick ups to be secured in the entry vestibule for all locations. Residences are able to drop off and pick up any necessary supplies and items within the entry vestibule during regular office hours eliminating any direct contact if so desired. All Staff and clients are instructed to wear masks while traveling in vehicles with any unvaccinated individuals.

## Communications and training practices and protocol

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was communicated via internal intranet (Deputy) and posted directly on the company website to all workers on June 19, 2020, and necessary training was provided through House Staff Meetings following. Additional communication and training will be ongoing by communication through the company cascading communication process, management training meetings and All Staff Meetings.. Training will be provided to all workers who did not receive the initial training and prior to initial assignment or reassignment.

Instructions will be communicated to all workers, including employees, temporary workers, staffing and labor- pools, independent contractors, subcontractors, vendors, and outside technicians, clients, visitors, and guests on protections and protocols, including but not limited to: 1) Social distancing protocols and practices; 2) Drop-off, pick-up, delivery and general in-store shopping; 3) Practices for hygiene and respiratory etiquette; 4) Recommendations regarding the use of masks, face-coverings, and/or face-shields by workers, clients, guests, and visitors. All workers, guests, and visitors will also be advised NOT to enter the workplace if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19.

Managers and supervisors are expected to monitor how effective the program has been implemented. The Administrative COVID Team will assess monthly the current program and conduct a situation update. All management and workers are to take an active role and collaborate in carrying out the various aspects of this plan, and update the protections, protocols, work-practices, and training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by **Synstelien Community Services** management, and the Plan was posted throughout the workplace and made readily available to employees on **June 19, 2020**. It will be updated as necessary by **Jennifer Baker, CEO** with revisions posted to the website.

## Additional protections and protocols

Other conditions and circumstances addressed in the Plan that are specific to our business include any additional precautionary measures for clients deemed necessary by the MDH and MN DHS in

coordination with Otter Tail County will be implemented and adhered to according to the guidelines provided.

Certified

by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Ball", is centered within a white rectangular box.

Chief Executive Officer

06/17/2020

Revised 7/10/2020

Revised 5/21/2021

# Appendix A – Guidance for COVID-19 Preparedness

## General

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Coronavirus (COVID-19) – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV)

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Coronavirus – [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus)

State of Minnesota: COVID-19 response – <https://mn.gov/covid19>

State of Minnesota: Executive Order 21-21  
[https://mn.gov/governor/assets/Signed%20Final%20EO-21-21%20Signed%20and%20Filed\\_tcm1055-480440.pdf](https://mn.gov/governor/assets/Signed%20Final%20EO-21-21%20Signed%20and%20Filed_tcm1055-480440.pdf)

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
<https://mn.gov/dhs/>

## Businesses

CDC: Resources for businesses and employers – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html)

CDC: General business frequently asked questions – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html)

MDH: Businesses and employers: COVID-19 – [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html)

MDH: Materials for businesses and employers – [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials)

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED): COVID-19 information and resources – <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/>

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI): Updates related to COVID-19 –

[www.dli.mn.gov/updates](http://www.dli.mn.gov/updates)

Federal OSHA –  
[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

## **Handwashing**

MDH: Handwashing video translated into multiple languages –  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQuPGVcceg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQuPGVcceg)

## **Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze**

CDC:  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html)

CDC:  
[www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing\\_sneezing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html)

MDH:  
[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html)

## **Vaccine**

State of Minnesota:  
<https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/connector/>

## **Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19**

CDC:  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

MDH:  
[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html)