



# **BENCHMARK**

HUMAN SERVICES

## **Connecticut COVID-19 Safety Plan**

### **A.W. Holdings, LLC d/b/a Benchmark Human Services (Benchmark) and Anthony Wayne Rehabilitation Center Inc. (AWRC)**

A.W. Holdings, LLC d/b/a Benchmark Human Services (Benchmark) and Anthony Wayne Rehabilitation Center for Handicapped and Blind, Inc. (AWRC), headquartered in Fort Wayne, Indiana, provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and behavioral health needs in 14 states. (Benchmark is a for-profit, privately held company, and AWRC is its not-for-profit sister company. Employees from both entities are employed under Benchmark, so for the purpose of this Plan, we will refer to both entities simply as Benchmark or the Company).

In mid-March 2020, Benchmark made significant changes to its business structure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Company closed all congregate day services sites, and significantly scaled back workforce at its industrial work centers, and provided limited, virtual community employment services, however, Benchmark's residential programs and home healthcare services are essential services, and have been in operation continuously. In-home early intervention services were suspended and replaced with tele therapy services.

As the Company re-opens and maintains day services and increases work levels at the work centers to full capacity, it will follow the stringent protocol it has had in place in its residential and office settings throughout the pandemic. This Safety Plan includes those protocols and establishes additional guidelines for congregate settings and transportation to keep employees and persons served safe. The Plan is based upon information available from the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the State of Connecticut, and any applicable local guidance and is subject to change based on further guidance from these and other public health agencies. Benchmark will monitor COVID-19 related guidance and will communicate any changes to this Plan. We are counting on all employees to familiar themselves and to do their part by following the Plan to promote a healthy, safe working environment.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Plan please contact Chief Nursing Officer, Kim Galaviz RN, BSN, MPM, [kgalaviz@benchmarkhs.com](mailto:kgalaviz@benchmarkhs.com); (260) 744-6145 ext. 5865 or if you wish to report non-compliance with the Plan, please contact Chief Compliance Officer/COVID Safety Officer, Margie Cantey, [mcantey@benchmarkhs.com](mailto:mcantey@benchmarkhs.com); (260) 207-5614.

#### **1. Proof of Vaccination Status:**

Staff will be considered vaccinated 14 days after the second dose in a two-dose series (*Pfizer or Moderna*), or 14 days after a single dose vaccination (*Johnson & Johnson*). Those who have an unknown status will be regarded as unvaccinated. Benchmark employees may demonstrate proof of full vaccination status by presenting the following documents:

- a.** The CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Card issued to the vaccine recipient by the vaccination site, or an electronic or physical copy of the same;

- b. The official record from the State's immunization registry;
- c. A record from a health care provider's portal/medical record system on official letterhead signed by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, registered nurse or pharmacist;
- d. A military immunization or health record from the United States Armed Forces; or e. Docket mobile phone application record or any state specific application that produces a digital health record.

*An employee who qualifies for an exemption from the vaccination (religious or medical/disability) may submit justification, to Katherine Key (Kkey@benchmarkhs.com) if requested.*

## **2. Health Screening**

Benchmark employees are to monitor their health for the following potential signs and symptoms of COVID-19: fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficult breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or running nose; nausea; vomiting; diarrhea and alert their supervisor. If employees have any of the mentioned signs or symptoms they are to contact their supervisor for further instruction. Protocols are in place to check the temperature of all employees/visitors prior to their shift or entering a home/facility. If an employee presents with a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, they are not permitted in the residence or facility and are unable to work their scheduled shift. The employee will not return to work until Quarantine Policy guidelines have been met.

Within Benchmark's residential/day settings, temperatures are taken with a touch free thermometer so employees presenting with a fever do not enter the home.

Plans have been developed for re-opening of congregate settings, which include monitoring temperatures while adhering to social distancing guidelines.

For work centers and industrial operations, temperatures are checked prior to employees starting their shifts.

Employees will be expected to follow work center specific guidelines and social distancing during all temperature checks.

Health screenings are conducted by designated staff at each site by designated shift. Temperature recording logs are confidential at all sites.

Home health staff, professional staff, managers, and office staff self-monitor their temperatures and symptoms on a daily basis prior to reporting to work.

Self-wellness checks have also been standard protocol in Benchmark's residential settings and will continue. The Company will add this protocol to congregate settings as they re-opened. Benchmark has asked employees to self-screen for other potential symptoms of COVID-19, i.e., dry cough, loss of smell or taste, etc.

Employees are to immediately report to their supervisor if they have been exposed to, have symptoms, and/or test positive to COVID-19. A COVID-19 Employee Reporting form will be submitted to the Chief Compliance Officer and Vice President of HR for all COVID-19 positive employees. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that coworkers are notified of potential exposure from a COVID positive employee, as applicable. The following protocol will be followed before returning to work:

Employees with exposure to COVID-19 without symptoms:	Protocol/Policy
Have been boosted or; Completed the primary series of <i>Pfizer or Moderna</i> vaccine within the last 6 months or; Completed the primary series of <i>J &amp; J</i> vaccine within the last 2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear an N95/KN95 mask for 10 days after the date of exposure*.</li> <li>• Test on day 5, if possible.</li> <li>• If symptoms develop get tested and quarantine.</li> </ul>
Completed the primary series of <i>Pfizer or Moderna</i> vaccine over 6 months ago and are NOT boosted or; Completed the primary series of <i>J &amp; J</i> vaccine over 2 months ago and are NOT boosted or; Are unvaccinated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarantine for 5 days after the date of exposure*. May return to work wearing an N95/KN95 mask for an additional 5 days.</li> <li>• If the local Benchmark program is operating on a contingency or crisis staffing status, employee may return to work wearing an N95/KN95 for 10 days after the date of exposure*.</li> <li>• Test on day 5, if possible.</li> <li>• If symptoms develop get tested and quarantine.</li> </ul>

It is very important for people with COVID-19 to remain apart from other people if possible, even if they are living together. Employees are encouraged to mask up and avoid close contact with positive household members. If separation of the person(s) with COVID-19 from others in your home is not possible, this is considered *ongoing* exposure, meaning repeated exposure will occur until that person(s) is no longer able to spread the virus to other people.

\*If employee is unable to avoid separation, the date of exposure will be extended to the last day of quarantine for the most recently infected person(s) in the household.

\*If employee or infected household member is able to fully separate, the exposure date is the last date of close contact with the infected person(s) in the household.

Employees who have symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19:	Protocol/Policy
Everyone, regardless of vaccination status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarantine for 5 days from when symptoms first appeared or from testing date (not the result date if different).</li> <li>• If without symptoms or symptoms are improving after 5 days, employee can return to work wearing an N95/KN95 mask for an additional 5 days.</li> <li>• If employee has a fever, quarantine to continue until resolved.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees without symptoms who are positive may work in a COVID positive residence with proper PPE based on director discretion.</li> </ul>
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**Protocol for Employees returning to the United States from International Travel**

Employees returning to the United States from international travel must adhere to the following protocol:

**Fully Vaccinated Employees Must:**

- A. Get tested 3-5 days upon return (may work upon return, before testing).
- B. Monitor symptoms.

**Unvaccinated Employees Must:**

- A. Return to work wearing a N95/KN95 for 7-10 days from the return date of travel.
- B. Get tested 3-5 days upon return, continue mask use if negative for 7 days.
- C. If employee is not tested than an N95/KN95 mask should be worn for 10 days.
- D. Monitor symptoms.

All staff returning after quarantine may work as usual but must abide by all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidance. An increase in PPE may be utilized per director discretion based on geographical data on COVID- 19 outbreaks or other relevant factors. Regardless of vaccination status, all employees must wear a mask while working with others.

Benchmark has conducted hazard assessments to determine risk and to assist employees in ensuring the health and safety of homes/offices/vehicles. (Note: additional hazard assessments may be completed as needed to address circumstances not already identified in this Plan).

**3. Cleaning**

Cleaning duties are shared among all employees, janitorial staff, and contracted cleaning companies. Within residential facilities, employees on each shift are responsible for thorough disinfecting of surfaces, including doorknobs, light switches, and other frequently touched surfaces, in addition to all counter tops, sinks, bathroom facilities, etc. In offices and congregate settings, each employee is responsible for disinfecting and cleaning their workspaces, while additionally, company janitorial staff or contracted cleaning companies must clean shared surfaces.

Door knobs / light switches / high touch shared surfaces and restrooms will be regularly sanitized. Lunch rooms and break rooms will be sanitized after each break period. A check off list will be posted in each of these areas, so that the individual cleaning can sign off on the completed tasks.

All common workspaces at shared facilities like break rooms, mailrooms, and restrooms are cleaned on a regular schedule. Countertops, work stations, office and building entrance doors and handles, restroom facilities, and frequently touched surfaces such as light switches will need to be sanitized or disinfected. All disinfecting agents are EPA approved and are used according to directions.

Disinfecting supplies are distributed from local depositories if and when individual programs are having difficulty ensuring a steady supply corporate will assist in securing needs. Inventories of supplies are maintained at the local program or office level.

#### **4. Employee Protection and PPE**

Hand sanitizer and wipes are located by all areas requiring regular cleaning, including offices, industrial locations, and residential sites. Staff in residential sites have been issued individual hand sanitizers. Staff must wash their hands frequently, including before each shift, as well as before and after eating or after using the restroom, following the recommended CDC protocol (use a foaming cleanser, wash for at least 20 seconds, dry thoroughly).

Touch free waste receptacles have been provided.

Face masks are currently required in all residential/day/work facilities and home health settings. Masks are mandatory for employees working in congregate settings with individuals served, and in all office settings, except when an employee is working independently at their designated work station or office. This means all staff and visitors must wear a mask when moving through hallways, in restrooms and common spaces, in meetings and trainings, when visiting a colleague's office, etc. If a face mask becomes soiled during an employee's shift a face mask will be provided by the Company. Otherwise, employees are responsible for cleaning cloth masks at home when worn after their shift. Further protection of N95 or KN95 masks may be required and are provided per Company policy. As home visits, within Benchmark's early intervention programs, resume in-person, face shields will be utilized for families who are willing to have therapists back in their home. Tele therapy will be used for as long as needed or for those families that do not want a face-to-face visit.

Face shields will be provided for instances in which people are closer than 6 feet apart and are at risk for coming into contact with COVID-19 positive bodily fluids, such as assisting individuals with rest rooming needs or with administration of aerosol treatments.

In a few areas where social distancing cannot be easily maintained by staff additional PPE may be utilized as appropriate. Every effort for interactions within six feet should be as limited as possible and under ten minutes.

As residential or home health staff work with a COVID-19 positive individuals all proper PPE gear will be provided and utilized as per special instructions (this may include gloves, N95 or KN95 masks, face shields and gown).

If any employee who is required by this Plan to wear a mask has a condition that makes that difficult or impossible, they should discuss reasonable accommodations with their Human Resources staff.

Supervisory staff can request additional PPE from the corporate office, as needed.

#### **5. Safety Education**

Throughout the pandemic, employees have received extensive training on protecting themselves and those served including information about transmission of COVID-19, cleaning, self-care, use of PPE, etc. COVID-19 education is provided to all new employees upon orientation. The home page of Benchmark's Intranet has been devoted to COVID-19 and is

updated regularly with training materials, guidelines from the Company, as well as the CDC, OSHA, and other reputable medical resources. Managers receive timely Manager Briefings on prevention, treatment, new or revised protocols or policies, etc. Employees have, and will continue, to meet with department supervisors to receive appropriate training. Flyers and posters have also been distributed and posted in homes, office and congregate facilities.

## **6. Workplace Restructuring**

All workstations or activity stations in work centers and day program sites are to be positioned at minimum of 6 feet apart whenever possible. Office settings have re-positioned work stations as much as possible to ensure social distancing.

Day services and work centers have taken a phased approach to bringing people back to congregate facilities, starting with the least vulnerable populations.

In congregate sites, all individuals served and employees will wash hands before lunch or snacks. Tables and all surface areas to be sanitized before and after each person attends lunch. All tables will be stationed 6 feet apart, and will allow only one person per table. Lunch and breaks will be staggered. In office settings, employees must sit at least 6 feet apart when eating in the cafeteria or break rooms.

## **7. Visitors**

Virtual visits with individuals served using Zoom, FaceTime, or other technologies are highly encouraged in lieu of face-to-face visits. In office settings, visitors must wear masks and report having no fever or COVID-19 symptoms to be admitted into the facilities. Notices indicating this directive are posted on all public entrances. Additionally, virtual meetings with potential visitors are encouraged for those working in office settings. Visitors who arrive for a scheduled appointment with Benchmark staff are asked to bring and wear a mask. They will be provided with a disposable mask if they do not have their own, and as long as they are displaying no symptoms of a coronavirus infection.

## **8. Position or Individual in Charge**

The Vice President of Human Resources and the Chief Nursing Officer will be in charge of implementation of this plan. Benchmark administration will consult CDC guidelines, state or local authority, and OSHA compliance assistance specialist (CAS) as needed. The Safety Committee will monitor logs and responses so that positive trends can be encouraged and negative trends addressed.

It is imperative that all management staff model the practices and procedures expected of employees so as to set the example and help reinforce the response plan among all employees.

## **9. Communication Regarding Changes to the Plan**

As states continue to reduce restrictions, Benchmark recognizes there may be an increase in positive COVID-19 cases resulting in changes to protocol. Any changes to this Plan will be communicated to management through a manager briefing and will be posted on the Intranet with a revision date. Changes that directly affect individuals served will be communicated to individuals and/or parents/guardians in writing or through their preferred method of communication.