



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Helpful Resources

PPE Shortage Guidance

Guidance in Case of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Shortages for Behavioral Health Residentially Based Care/Services, Congregate Foster Care, and other Housing Providers

If PPE (masks, alcohol-based hand sanitizer) is in short supply, programs may have to adapt their practices. The following recommendations are provided to assist programs in ensuring safety when PPE supplies are not available.

1. In case of shortage of alcohol-based sanitizer, clients and staff should increase handwashing practices. Wash hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds after coming into contact with any surface, other person, or prior to touching the face.
2. COVID-19 is primarily spread through droplets in the air. Maintaining physical distance from others is critical to avoid droplets that are formed when a person sneezes, coughs, yells, etc. Per PA Department of Health orders, all individuals are required to wear a mask when in shared spaces. In the absence of masks, alternative face coverings should be used and strict physical distancing is important.
3. When there is scarcity of masks, the [CDC recommends](#) an individual re-use masks, provided they are not torn, soiled, or damaged. Masks with elastic bands are easier to reuse than those with bands that need to be tied.
4. Additional guidance on masks from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, including guidance on homemade masks, can be found here:
pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/#UniversalMasking