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Serving Children and Adults with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities for over 70 Years

January 10, 2021

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Dear Individuals, Families, and AHRC Suffolk Team Members:

I hope you all safely enjoyed your holiday season. I am sure you join me in believing that this new year will bring us hope and health. There is already great hope and promise growing as COVID-19 vaccines become more readily available.

With the rollout of the vaccines in our area, I am thrilled to report that over 90 individuals and more than 30 staff have received the COVID-19 vaccine. There have been few reports of very minor and minimal reactions from those who have received it. For those who have not yet received the vaccine, we strongly encourage the individuals we support and their families to look at research that is based on facts and science, speak to their healthcare providers, and discuss any issues or concerns with our program staff. We will continue to reach out to families to share the options available to those we support. Click [HERE](#) for vaccine information.

Currently, individuals in our residences are being prioritized by the Department of Health due to the disproportionate COVID-19 vulnerability these situations present. Although individuals who reside at family homes are not yet prioritized, we have begun speaking with families and individuals to inform, educate and receive consent so that we are ready when the vaccine becomes available to them. While it is frustrating that not all of our individuals are currently classified as priorities for the vaccine by the Department of Health, it is important to remember that guidance and regulations change daily. The tiered rollout is necessary as to not overwhelm the system, much like boarding a plane by rows, instead of all at once.

Our staff remaining healthy is of equal importance, as they are vital members of our team. We can't provide our necessary services and programs without each and every healthy team member. I ask each employee to also review research based on facts and science when considering the COVID-19 vaccine. As essential workers, all AHRC Suffolk staff are currently permitted to receive the vaccine, as our potential infection can impact those we support in devastating ways. In the aggregate, we are required to report to OPWDD the percentage of staff who have been vaccinated, though no names or personal information is shared. Not only do staff members who choose to receive the vaccination help protect themselves, their families and their loved ones, they also help protect our AHRC Suffolk family. In doing so, we can also help increase the confidence of the individuals and family members we are speaking and working with. Our wish is to keep every member of our AHRC Suffolk family healthy and safe.

Lastly, we are in urgent need of additional staff in our residences. There are positions available in all shifts, including days, nights and weekends between Residential Services and Adult Day Services, who are providing in-home Day Habilitation services. Please think of those you can refer for such fulfilling and necessary work, and please share with your friends and family. A full listing of current job openings can be found [HERE](#). I must also give special recognition to our Residential staff, who gave even more of themselves than usual during the past few weeks. Juggling a smaller staffing pool, holiday festivities and vacation time makes it especially challenging, and once again our staff stepped up! Now we must work to lessen their overload by recruiting more team members!

Stay well, stay safe and thank you for all you do,

Paul H. Torres
 Chief Executive Officer



NEW STAFF NEEDED!! Join the AHRC Suffolk Team! Visit www.ahrCSuffolk.org/careers to see our current openings at various locations. Apply today!