



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

April 24, 2020

PAUL TORRES
Executive Director

Dear AHRC Suffolk Individuals, Families and Staff:

We are now many weeks into our COVID-19 response. While we have suffered heartbreaking losses and have struggled through many challenges, your extraordinary devotion, care, and tireless efforts to support people with disabilities and their families, and each other, has been unprecedented.

BOARD MEMBERS

Joseph Cassarini
John Smith
Joseph Zifchock

As we continue to navigate the weeks ahead, let's pause and celebrate the enormous power of team diversity. We are all different in so many ways, but these differences are grounded in the recognition that we share a common purpose. In our work with people with disabilities, this is one of the most essential and optimistic ways of embracing our common humanity. Disability can mean different, but we all know it does not mean less human. Our nation's founding premise was that of equal rights and it must always be our North Star. Doing our best to keep the people we support safe from the Coronavirus is not just a programmatic or clinical effort, it is grounded in the basic human rights of the people we support.

In previous messages, I have mentioned our continued efforts to acquire the resources necessary to maintain a strong response to the Coronavirus. I am pleased to say that we continue to be successful in acquiring substantial amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE). All staff members working in any of our programs have access to PPE. If, for any reason, you have concerns about PPE availability, please let your department head know immediately. Never is the time more critical that we remain vigilant and stick stringently to our routines of washing hands, cleaning routinely and using PPE consistently.

The weight of the emotional toll that this crisis can take on everyone is obvious. Despite community spirit and resilience let's remember that adults need to engage in self-care as well. For as we push aside our personal needs to ensure the wellbeing of those we are caring for, or to engage in professional responsibilities, we need to remember that "you can't pour from an empty cup." Take care of yourselves - [Click Here](#) for an article on self-help from the Harvard Medical School.

While we cannot predict when the Coronavirus crisis will settle down, we can find some comfort in that we are truly all in this together and, because of that, our bonds will be even further strengthened as we learn together, plan together, and rebuild together. The question isn't if we will weather this unknown, but how will we weather this unknown together. I am confident that this experience will strengthen us in ways we might not have imagined and bring us closer in together as a community in ways we may have not believed possible.

If the response to the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that together we are truly better and can overcome unimaginable obstacles if we stay the course. Thank you for staying the course!

Stay Well,

Paul H. Torres
Executive Director

Your gift to our COVID-19 Relief Fund helps us purchase personal protective equipment, provide expanded medical and mental health services, increase our technology, and so much more. To donate, click the **Donate to AHRC Suffolk's COVID-19 Relief Fund** icon at the top of our home page (*donations, marked Covid-19 Relief Fund, can also be mailed to the address at the top of this letter*).

