



March 20, 2020

To the Lifeworks & Arc of South Norfolk Communities,

I hope that all of you are healthy and managing through this challenging time. The past two weeks have been difficult, daunting and hard to comprehend for many. In my role at The Arc and Lifeworks, I have found these weeks to also be inspiring and heartwarming. I am aware of many great stories of the flexibility and dedication of our staff, of the willingness of families to help other families, of the dedication of the people we support to our agency, to their jobs and to their families.

It is my hope, beginning today, to provide weekly updates regarding our organization and our programs, to update all of you- the people we serve, our families and our amazing staff as to what the agencies are doing and how we are working together to continue serve our mission.

As many of you know, in conjunction with our Board of Directors, we took the steps to close our day and employment programs for Lifeworks and The Arc beginning on Tuesday in an action that was in accordance with the Governor's state of emergency and with the advice of the state Dept. of Public Health. Since then we have focused on the following:

- Moving dozens of staff from working in our day programs, to working in our residential programs operated by Lifeworks. As of Friday, over 65 staff have offered to take shifts in a variety of our programs. We are incredibly fortunate to have the dedication and flexibility of these folks.
- We have a significant number of staff who are responsible for supporting their children at home, supporting elderly family members or may have a personal risk due to the Covid19. We are working with all of those staff to access paid time off, the new federal benefits or other state benefit to ensure their supports. All of our staff are extremely valuable and when this crisis is over, we will need all of these valuable professionals to return to their regular positions. Our Human Resources and Business offices will be working with all.
- Our Arc Family Support and Family Autism Center staff are in touch with the families served by these centers, to assess their needs and provide all the support we can. Our staff will be available both in the office and remotely. We will be providing support by teleconferencing and dropping off supplies when necessary for people who are at risk.

- The Lifeworks and Arc staff are working together to develop an inventory of all personal protective equipment supplies that we have to ensure the safety of all. We are also utilizing our drivers and staff to have a food delivery system, to bring all necessary food and supplies to our residences and those whom we support who live independently.
- Our Business Office staff have worked to ensure a fully operational payroll for all staff. This is in place. We have ensured that all staff who are on agency health benefits will remain on benefits, no matter their ability to work or not, no matter whether they have paid time off or not. No one will lose their health benefits due to the crisis.
- As I am writing this, our HR Dept. is developing plans to implement the new Families First Paid sick leave and paid leave policies as they relate to the issues facing our staff. We will also make this consultation available to families, who may need advice in facing their challenges in their jobs. Brown & Brown, our benefits advisors are working closely with us on this.
- I am working with Arc of Massachusetts and as well as trade organizations ADDP and the Providers Council to advocate for the needs of the people we serve and our agencies. We face an extensive challenge and we hope that our partnership with the Commonwealth and their funding agencies will ensure the safety net of our systems.

The focus of our agencies this week has been clear- Safety, Health, Shelter, Food & Supplies, Financial Assurance for our staff and families and maintaining the availability of our services. Next week, we will continue to work on these areas plus seek to expand our information for all of you. I am so grateful for the amazing efforts of so many people. Thank you and please know, that our agencies will be here for all of you -both now, next week and for the future!!!

Sincerely to all, with a hope for good health:



Daniel Burke
President/CEO
Lifeworks Inc. & The Arc of South Norfolk