



March 31, 2020

Dear Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Service Provider:

Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Service Providers are already experiencing staff shortages due to COVID-19. Staffing will be critical to meet the demand that you will experience. When you have exhausted your traditional staffing channels, such as registries and agencies, there will be few options remaining.

In a collaborative effort to help New York City (NYC) health care facilities mitigate staff shortages, the NYC Departments of Health and Emergency Management created a referral program called NYC Healthcare Surge Staff Support. Healthcare workers who are currently not working in a healthcare facility and who want to support this effort are being asked to join the NYC Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The NYC MRC is comprised of licensed health care professionals that can be mobilized to respond to public health emergencies. Once registered, MRC members will be able to sign up for opportunities to support facilities that need their expertise. Over 1,700 health care professionals signed up in just the last week alone.

Plan

To most effectively utilize volunteers, we urge each provider of behavioral health or developmental disability services to immediately develop a plan for the emergency credentialing, on-boarding, and training of volunteers that will be needed to fill critical roles. Your initial staffing request to the NYC Healthcare Surge Staff Support should be for specific roles, along with the date, time, and location that you want the volunteers to show up for credentialing, on-boarding and training. Once this critical step is completed, you will be able to utilize these volunteers following your own protocols.

Request

To request volunteers, please complete this survey detailing your surge staffing needs:

1. Go to the Get Help: Assistance for Organizations section of Help Now NYC <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/helpnownyc/get-help/organizations.page>
2. Under the title “Assistance for Healthcare Facilities” click the “complete this form” link and fill out the form.
3. Complete and submit the survey.

Onboard

Upon receiving your surge staffing request, we will work to match providers with licensed healthcare staff, as they are available. Requesting provider organizations will be responsible for credentialing, training, and onboarding processes. All terms of work, including compensation, if applicable, should be agreed upon between the staff and the provider institution making the request before staff begin their shifts.

Tips

In order to maximize your staffing resources during this unprecedented surge in patient care, we recommend the following:

- Identify clinical staff across facilities and systems, including those in administrative positions
- Staff should “practice at the top of their license” (e.g., licensed social workers should focus on providing therapy and crisis management, deferring case management to unlicensed staff or volunteers)
- Develop flexible staffing and patient assignment models to allocate personnel to the most



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
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Commissioner

pressing patient needs

- Develop just-in-time training to ensure competency of existing staff or volunteers with novel or rarely used skills

We hope this effort will support your staffing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to your comments, including your suggestions for improvement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Oxiris Barbot MD'.

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner