



March 23, 2020

Dear Behavioral Health Provider:

Behavioral Health 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 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 behavioral health provider to immediately develop a plan for emergency credentialing, on-boarding, and training 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 <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/helpnownyc/resources/covid-19-relief.page>.
2. Under the title “For Healthcare Facilities Seeking Surge Staff,” click on the link to complete the survey.
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 behavioral health providers 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
- Develop flexible staffing and patient assignment models to allocate personnel to the most pressing patient needs
- Develop just-in-time training to ensure competency of existing staff or volunteers with novel or rarely used skills



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

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". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner