



**March 24, 2020**

## **OPWDD Interim Guidance Regarding Abbreviated/Refresher Training and Recertifications to Address COVID-19 Emergency Response**

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 202 on March 7, 2020, as modified by Executive Order 202.5, on March 18, 2020, residential and nonresidential facilities and programs certified or operated by OPWDD may immediately abbreviate certain training requirements for direct support professionals. Those requirements contained within 14 NYCRR sections 633.8, 633.14, and 633.17, are temporarily modified, as outlined within this document, in response to the COVID-19 crisis and to provide the greatest amount of flexibility possible to providers of services for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

### **A. Abbreviated Trainings Requirements Under Sections 633.8**

With respect to trainings required under Section 633.8, OPWDD approved providers may immediately abbreviate these trainings in order to expedite their onboarding processes to address COVID-19 related staffing shortages. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Agencies should consider abbreviated training formats and alternate delivery methods for training, such as webinars, video recording and self-certification documentation (“read and signs”);
- Initial abbreviated training formats must still support the NYS DSP Core Competencies, and must still include, in abbreviated format:
  - principles of human growth and development;
  - characteristics of the persons served;
  - promoting positive relationships;
  - abuse prevention, identification, reporting, and processing of allegations of abuse; laws, regulations and policies/procedures governing protection from abuse;
  - incident reporting and processing;
  - the agency's safety and security procedures (including fire safety); and
  - and other appropriate topics relative to the safety and welfare as may have been specified by the agency.
- For new employees, agencies that utilize abbreviated training formats for the purpose of accelerating the onboarding of direct support professionals must ensure that all employees meet pre-existing annual training requirements within 120 days of onboarding.
- For current employees, annual training requirements for direct support professionals, who have previously completed all training requirements, will be extended ninety days. Annual trainings include:
  - promoting positive relationships;
  - abuse prevention, identification, reporting, and processing of allegations of abuse;
  - laws, regulations and policies/procedures governing protection from abuse;

- incident reporting and processing; and the agency's safety and security procedures (including fire safety).

## **B. Tuberculosis Testing and Training Requirements Under Section 633.14**

With respect to testing and trainings required under Section 633.14, OPWDD approved providers may immediately expedite their onboarding processes to address COVID-19 related staffing shortages in the following ways:

- Initial and annual testing for tuberculosis, required pursuant to Section 633.14, are waived temporarily, to the extent necessary to onboard staff required in response to COVID-19 related staffing shortages;
- Tuberculosis screening should be performed, instead, for new employees in lieu of full PPD testing. A tuberculosis screening questionnaire is available here: (<https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/03/3.24.2020-tb-screening-form.pdf>);
- Agencies should consider abbreviated training formats and alternate delivery methods for training such as webinars, video recording and self-certification documentation (“read and signs”). Initial training must include the signs and symptoms of active pulmonary tuberculosis, and information on agency-specific policies and procedures;
- Annual training requirements for current direct support professionals will be extended ninety days. Annual training must include the signs and symptoms of active pulmonary tuberculosis, and information on agency-specific policies and procedures.

## **C. Abbreviated Trainings Requirements Under Section 633.17**

With respect to trainings required under Sections 633.17, OPWDD approved providers may immediately expedite their onboarding processes, in order to address COVID-19 related staffing shortages in the following ways:

- An abbreviated Medication Administration Course has been developed and will be made available for direct support professionals who have not yet been certified;
- Annual Medication Administration Certification for direct support professionals will be extended for ninety days for those staff who have routinely administered medication since their most recent certification and upon approval of the facility's registered nurse;
- Managers/supervisors who have received Medication Administration Certification within the past 12 months may administer medication when no direct support professional with AMAP certification is available; and
- Managers/supervisors who have not received Medication Administration Certification within the past 12 months may administer medication when no direct support professional with AMAP certification is available, provided they have taken and passed the abbreviated Medication Administration Course.