



March 30, 2021

## OPWDD Updated Guidance Regarding Abbreviated/Refresher Training and Recertifications

On March 7, 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued Executive Order No. 202, thereafter modified and extended, allowing residential and nonresidential facilities and programs certified or operated by OPWDD to immediately abbreviate certain training requirements for direct support professionals.

On March 24, 2020, OPWDD issued guidance entitled *OPWDD Interim Guidance Regarding Abbreviated/Refresher Training and Recertifications to Address COVID-19 Emergency Response*, and on March 29, 2020, OPWDD issued guidance entitled *OPWDD Interim Guidance Regarding Modified Training and Recertifications to Address COVID-19 Emergency Response*.

The following guidance supersedes and replaces both guidance documents and is provided to assist in re-establishing training programs and ensure that staff are appropriately trained as the state continues a safe and gradual reopening plan.

### A. Trainings Requirements Pursuant to 14 NYCRR 633.8

For employees whose annual recertification trainings were delayed, in accordance with the Executive Order authority related to 14 NYCRR 633.8, annual training should resume and be implemented in a manner that maintains health and safety requirements, particularly when remote or social distancing practices cannot be utilized to effectively train.

**All staff due for a refresher training must receive that training. Staff whose training was delayed due to the COVID-19 health emergency must complete annual training requirements as soon as practicable but no later than one year from the date of this memo.**

Those 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;
- the agency's safety and security procedures (including fire safety).

Additionally, agencies should determine the effectiveness of alternate training delivery methods such as webinars, video recording and self-certification documentation ("read and signs") and modify as necessary.

Agencies are responsible for ensuring their staff develop the knowledge and skills required to successfully perform the duties of the position. Initial trainings must still support the NYS DSP Core Competencies, and must still include:

- 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 employees who were hired during the public health emergency, agencies must determine if additional training is needed based on the performance and competency of staff.

## **B. Tuberculosis Testing and Training Requirements Pursuant to 14 NYCRR 633.14**

Annual training for current direct support professionals should resume, consistent with COVID-19 safety protocols (e.g. social distancing). Annual training must include the signs and symptoms of active pulmonary tuberculosis, and information on agency-specific policies and procedures.

**Recertification/annual trainings that were delayed, in accordance with the Executive Order related to 14 NYCRR 633.14, should be completed as soon as practicable but no later than one year from the date of this memo.**

**Staff hired during the COVID-19 public health emergency who have received tuberculosis screening, in lieu of a test, should receive the full PPD testing within one year of their hire date or 90 days of the date of this memo, whichever is later.**

Agencies should determine the effectiveness of alternate training delivery methods such as webinars, video recording and self-certification documentation ("read and signs") and modify as necessary.

Initial training must include the signs and symptoms of active pulmonary tuberculosis, and information on agency-specific policies and procedures.

## **C. Abbreviated Trainings Requirements Pursuant to 14 NYCRR 633.17**

Annual Medication Administration Certification for direct support professionals should resume immediately. Agencies should train staff using the full Medication Administration course that was used prior to the public health emergency (or any new versions provided at a later date). Agencies may consider alternate delivery methods for staff training during the lecture portions of the training; however, all skills-based portions must be conducted in person for staff to be certified.

Staff who were trained utilizing the abbreviated Medication Administration Training Program and who displayed significant errors and/or competency concerns are not authorized to pass medications until successful completion of the full Medication Administration course and clinical practicum of three successful medication passes.

The one-year annual recertifications for staff trained with the abbreviated Medication Administration Training Program, in accordance with the Executive Order, must include review of the systems and common diagnoses/medications related to that system and one successful medication pass.

**Delayed recertification and annual training should be completed as soon as practicable but no later than nine months from the date of this memo.**

Agencies should prioritize recertifications for those staff currently assigned to programs that require staff to administer medications. Agencies should continue to follow medication

administration reporting protocols to address staff medication errors.

Trainings that are currently scheduled to occur within the next 30 days, utilizing the abbreviated Medication Administration Training Program previously made available by OPWDD in accordance with the authority of Executive Order related to 14 NYCRR 633.17, may proceed. That abbreviated training should no longer be used to train staff beyond thirty days of the issuance of this memo.

#### **D. Modified Training Requirements Pursuant to 14 NYCRR 633.16**

**Recertification trainings delayed, in accordance with the Executive Order related to 14 NYCRR 633.16, should resume immediately and must be completed no later than nine months from the date of this memo.**

To maintain appropriate levels of support, agencies should continue a targeted approach to staff training for Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention-Revised (SCIP-R) or Positive Relationships Offer More Opportunities to Everyone (PROMOTE), as required under 633.16. Staff responsible for implementing behavior support plans (BSP) that incorporate the use of physical intervention technique(s) must successfully complete an OPWDD-approved training course on the use of positive behavioral approaches, strategies and/or supports and physical intervention techniques. Staff should only be trained to the level of certification that includes the physical intervention techniques necessary to implement the BSPs of individuals they will be supporting in the certified programs where they primarily work (e.g., SCIP-R Core, PROMOTE Level 1). If staff are not implementing a BSP that requires a restrictive physical intervention, they do not need to be trained in those techniques.

Staff training of physical intervention techniques requires practice and assessment of the physical interventions to be conducted in person for staff to become certified. Use of face coverings, hand hygiene, social distancing and smaller training groups should be practiced. Agencies may consider alternate delivery methods for staff training during the lecture and small group activity portions of the training.

Additional instruction on classroom protocols will be distributed from the OPWDD Master Trainers to agency contacts.

For staff training that does not require a certification in SCIP-R or PROMOTE, agencies may consider alternate delivery methods including webinars and video conferencing.

OPWDD guidelines for SCIP-R and PROMOTE require staff training in first aid and CPR for staff that are trained to use restrictive physical intervention techniques.