

From: **Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services** <rcaas@gsapp.rutgers.edu>

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Subject: RCAAS Operations Status- Rutgers UHR COVID-19 Telecommuting and COVID-19 Paid Leave Guidelines

To: Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services <rcaas@gsapp.rutgers.edu>

Cc: Christopher Manente <cmene001@scarletmail.rutgers.edu>

Dear RCAAS Staff,

I hope that you and your families are all well. I realize that this past week has not been an easy one for any of us. The spread of the Coronavirus has resulted in an unprecedented situation for many, and as was communicated in the last correspondence from GSAPP Associate Dean Lara Delmolino, circumstances are rapidly changing, and our next steps and options are not always clear.

Last week, the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (NJ DDD) provided guidance closing all Day Programs and discontinuing providers from engaging in any community-based supports. This can be accessed

here: <https://nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/documents/division-update-COVID19-03132020.pdf>. Additional resources/updates related to NJDDD guidance in response to the Coronavirus can be accessed via the NJ Department of Human Services website here: <https://nj.gov/humanservices/coronavirus.html>

In light of this guidance, we are ceasing all on-campus or other in-person community-based services (i.e., no one from RCAAS will be required to physically report for work). It is becoming very clear that it is possible that our campus/center-based operations may not resume for some time and we are exploring all options for remote support. Additionally, yesterday Rutgers University Human Resources (UHR) released guidance via email related to the availability of COVID-19 Telecommuting and COVID-19 Paid Leave for university faculty/staff.

Please take the time to familiarize yourselves with the specific guidelines and any corresponding requirements related to the application process/deadlines to inform your decisions related to what is best for you and your family. This guidance can be accessed here: <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/covid-19-update-on-leave-and-telecommuting>

While caring for yourself and your immediate family should be your first priority during this crisis, I am hopeful that you will also consider the needs of the individuals with autism and their families that we have committed to serve. While most in-person direct care for our program participants would not be indicated given the current need for social distancing, we are hopeful that we will be able to identify enough RCAAS staff with the resources to be in regular contact with RCAAS participants and families who are interested in receiving consultative services via telehealth.

Your supervisor(s) will be in touch with you via email to schedule time to connect with each of you by phone on Monday 3/23 to learn more about each of your individual circumstances to assess what resources our team collectively has to offer our individual program participants and their families. Please do everything possible to make yourselves available to connect with your supervisors about this on Monday.

While these are very trying times that often require us to focus on taking things day-by-day, this crisis will eventually pass. I look forward to a time when we are all back on campus together and are able to resume our mission towards making the world a better place for all adults with autism. Please know that you are all crucial to the success of our organization and I am committed to do everything in my power to ensure that the RCAAS team has the resources that we need to weather this storm and get back to doing what we do best. In the meantime, please choose optimism...be strong...be kind and compassionate with each other!

Best,

Christopher

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