



2900 Veterans Memorial Highway • Bohemia, NY 11716
 P: (631) 585-0100
 F: (631) 585-0233
 Email: Info@suffahrc.org
 Web: www.ahrcsuffolk.org

Serving Children and Adults with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities for over 70 Years

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Dear Individuals, Families, and AHRC Suffolk Team Members:

Continue to Vaccinate and Advocate!

As of today, we have notice of **163 individuals** in residence and **212 staff** who have received the COVID-19 vaccine. Of those numbers, **75 individuals** and **61 staff** have reported receiving the second dose! Despite the current inadequate supply of the vaccine, our numbers continue to increase as people are able to secure limited appointment times. Please continue to advocate for vaccine priority for every individual—click **HERE** to make your voice heard! We are encouraged by staff, individuals and families who continue researching the vaccine and preparing for when they are more readily available. We receive many inquiries regarding what impact vaccines can and will have on our programs.

Questions: If all residents in an AHRC Suffolk community residence receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and all residential staff for that home receive the vaccine, is it possible for those individuals to return to in-person program? If more individuals and staff in our Adult Day Services programs receive the vaccine, will more individuals living with family or in another agency’s residences be able to return to our buildings to receive in-person services?

Answer: We are just as eager as all of you to welcome more people into our buildings, when it is determined that it can be done safely and in the best interest of all individuals and staff. It is our hope that as more people receive vaccinations, more family members feel comfortable sending their loved ones back to our programs. According to the World Health Organization, “experts do not yet know what percentage of people would need to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity to COVID-19. Herd immunity means that enough people in a community are protected from getting a disease because they’ve already had the disease or they’ve been vaccinated. Herd immunity makes it hard for the disease to spread from person to person, and it even protects those who cannot be vaccinated. The percentage of people who need to have protection in order to achieve herd immunity varies by disease. The Centers for Disease Control and other experts are studying herd immunity and will provide more information as it is available.” While experts carry on their research, we continue receiving guidance from the CDC, Department of Health and OPWDD, with hope that current limitations on transportation and classroom capacities will be relaxed once larger percentages of communities are immunized. #InItTogether

To kick off Black History Month, we’re sharing one of our favorite quotes from Amanda Gorman (National Youth Poet Laureate)’s now famous poem *The Hill We Climb*.

*If we merge mercy with might, and might with right,
 then love becomes our legacy and change our children’s birthright
 so let us leave behind a country better than the one we were left with.*

Stay well, stay safe and thank you for all you do,

Paul H. Torres
Chief Executive Officer



NEW STAFF NEEDED! Join the AHRC Suffolk Team! Visit www.ahrcsuffolk.org/careers to see our current openings at various day program and residential locations. Apply today!

BECOME A MEMBER! 2021 Memberships are now available! Help make our collective voice stronger. Visit www.ahrcsuffolk.org/membership today!

DONATE TO OUR COVID-19 FUND! Our expenses continue to mount each day. Please click **HERE** to donate today!