

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES CIRCULAR

Date: July 21, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID #2020-116

Alternate Program(s): N/A

To: Program Managers/Regional Directors/Community Area Directors

Subject: Non-medical Masks for Community Living disABILITY Services Participants

Type: Policy
 Procedure
 Rate
 Information Only

Effective Date: Immediately and until further notice

Non-medical masks have not been proven to protect wearers from getting COVID-19. However, wearing a non-medical mask is a way to protect others when people cannot maintain physical distancing (i.e., six feet or two meters apart). When worn properly, a person wearing a non-medical mask can reduce the spread of their respiratory droplets.

Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) participants may wear a non-medical (i.e., cloth) mask if they choose to. **However, participants who find it difficult to put on or take off a mask or who have difficulty breathing should not wear a mask.**

The department's ability to sustain services for CLDS participants during COVID-19 is dependent on the continued availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff. Given this, medical masks are reserved for staff who support CLDS participants. This approach ensures that staff have the appropriate PPE needed to protect themselves, other staff, CLDS participants and the community at large from the spread of the virus.

The department will not provide medical masks or funding for non-medical masks for CLDS participants. If a CLDS participant would like to wear a non-medical mask, please visit <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/non-medical-mask-poster.pdf> for guidance.

If a CLDS participant begins exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19 during the provision of services, service providers should provide the participant with a medical mask and encourage them to wear it if they can safely do so.

Hand hygiene and other prevention measures, including frequent hand washing and physical distancing, remain the best approach to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Please visit <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/prepareandprevent/index.html> for more information.

If you have any questions, please contact your CLDS Leading Program and Practice Specialist.

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cc: Distribution List