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**Allegheny Children's Initiative • Citizen Care  
Exceptional Adventures • Milestone Centers  
Partners for Quality Foundation**

**CORONAVIRUS**

**Crisis Timeline**

**2020-2022**



**Crisis Timeline 2020-2021**

Since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, the top priority of Partners For Quality (PFQ) and its family of agencies has been the safety and well being of the people we support and our dedicated staff.

From the beginning, Partners For Quality has followed all safe practice guidelines from governing health bodies.

Partners For Quality formed a Coronavirus Task Force, in February 2020, comprised of key personnel from PFQ administration and all family agencies. The Task Force initially met weekly, then moved to daily conference calls. The medical point person for the Task Force is Natalie Symons, RN, Director of the Milestone Centers Health Care Quality Unit (HCQU) West. Discussion topics include:

- The latest data from the Centers for Disease Control, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Allegheny County Health Department
- Education and training of staff and persons supported
- Effective prevention and mitigation measures
- Regular monitoring of:
  - Client health (possible Coronavirus symptoms)
  - Staff health (possible Coronavirus symptoms)
  - Adequate personal protection equipment and other hygienic supplies
  - The use and effectiveness of telehealth as a means of delivering support to behavioral health clients

Education and guidance for staff and persons supported included the creation and distribution of handwashing / hygienic guidelines in the form of posters, fliers and email. In some cases, videos were created and shared to ensure learning and proper practicing. Partners For Quality also added a dedicated Coronavirus page on its existing staff SharePoint intranet site to provide consistency in communication to all staff.

Additionally, the Partners For Quality Human Resources office has established a “Concierge Help Line” for staff to call with any questions and concerns. The line answers seven days a week between 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.

## Crisis Timeline 2020-2021

### Monday, March 2, 2020

Partners For Quality CEO Maggie Rothenberger informs all staff that the PFQ Coronavirus Task Force has been formed; and reminds them about the importance of hand washing and other universal hygienic precautions in which they have been trained.

### Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Partners For Quality Coronavirus Task Force inaugural meeting held.  
Task Force members:

#### Partners For Quality

Maggie Rothenberger  
*CEO*  
Bobbi Reidenbach  
*Chief Operating Officer*  
Natalie Symons, RN  
*Director, Milestone HCQU West*  
Tony Drane  
*Chief Program Officer*  
Cindy King  
*Chief Human Resources Officer*  
Dan Skreptach / DanChristman,  
*Chief Financial Officer*  
Scott Douglass  
*Executive Director of Quality  
& Compliance*  
Greg Jena  
*Executive Director of Communications*  
Mark Lewis  
*Director of Facilities Management*  
Sarah Blonski  
*Exec. Dir., Exceptional Adventures*  
Tami Rippy  
*Director of Special Events, Foundation*  
Maureen Schiavo  
*Executive Assistant/Board Liaison*  
Marty Sporrer  
*USI Insurance Broker*

#### Allegheny Children's Initiative

Nichole Wood  
*Director of Quality Assurance*  
Lisa Peterson-Lizun, *Executive Director*

#### Citizen Care

Jesie Davis  
*Director of Quality Improvement*  
Elmer Nemeth/Lisa Musselman,  
*Executive Director*  
Lisa Musselman, *Executive Director*  
Petra Mussi/Tony DiBiagio  
*Asst. Exec. Dir., Community Living*  
Jeff Truxell  
*Asst. Exec. Dir., In-Home / Habilitation*  
Julie Bulgarelli,  
*Director, Learning, Employment  
and Retirement Services*  
Ariel Murphy, RN  
*Citizen Care Nurse*  
Representatives from A&G Pharmacy

#### Milestone Centers

Gary Bell/Jordan Coughlen  
*Executive Director*  
Stacey Dowden  
*Asst. Exec. Dir., Intellectual  
& Developmental Disability Services*  
Paula Fischer  
*Director of Senior Services*  
Tom Swanson  
*Director of Facilities Management*

**Crisis Timeline 2020**

Partners For Quality Coronavirus Task Force members, continued:

**Milestone Centers**

David Reese

*Dir. of Intellectual and Developmental  
Disability Vocational Services*

Carmen Osborne

*Chief Compliance Officer*

**Friday, March 6, 2020**

Partners For Quality (PFQ) CEO Maggie Rothenberger authors letter to persons supported and their family/loved ones, informing them of the creation of the Coronavirus Task Force. Posted on websites PFQ.org and MilestonePA.org; also posted on Partners For Quality and Milestone Centers Facebook pages.

**Friday, March 6, 2020**

PFQ Communications office creates a dedicated "Coronavirus" page on the SharePoint staff intranet site. The page houses information, education, various resources and updates. New information continues to be added regularly.

**Friday, March 6, 2020**

PFQ Task Force Communications team creates and distributes posters and fliers reminding staff and persons supported about the proper way to wash hands; practice social distancing; sneeze/cough into arm and stay home if sick.

**Monday, March 9, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger delivers a video message to all staff, informing them of the work being done by the Task Force and emphasizing hand washing and other hygienic measures.

Milestone Health Care Quality Unit (HCQU) West Director Natalie Symons, RN, delivers a video message to all staff, explaining detailed hygienic measures and the best ways to practice prevention.

Both messages were sent via email and posted on the PFQ SharePoint staff intranet site.

**Wednesday, March 11, 2020**

Second meeting of the PFQ Coronavirus Task Force.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Wednesday, March 11, 2020**

Coronavirus Task Force Communications team produced and distributed signage for outside entry doors for all agencies' offices and service locations, informing that we practice regular handwashing, practice social distancing and that if you're feeling sick, contact your doctor and do not enter the premises.

**Wednesday, March 11, 2020**

PFQ Human Resources office initiatives face-to-face infection control training with direct support staff.

**Friday, March 13, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger authors letter to stakeholders that all intellectual and developmental disability day programs at Citizen Care and Milestone Centers will close effective immediately, until further notice. Posted on websites PFQ.org and MilestonePA.org; also posted on Partners For Quality and Milestone Centers Facebook pages. This was completed ahead of the Pennsylvania State closures enacted on March 17, 2020.

**Sunday, March 15, 2020**

The majority of intellectual and developmental disability day programming staff at Citizen Care and Milestone Centers are redeployed to residential services at Citizen Care and Milestone Centers.

**Monday, March 16, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger and Human Resources Executive Director Cindy King send communication to all staff about the pending approval of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act. The memo explained that as soon as the proposed Bill becomes final, Partners For Quality, with legal counsel input, will provide staff with more specific information and how we will comply with the Bill.

This communication also announced the creation of the PFQ Human Resources Help Line. The Concierge Help Line, opening March 17, answers 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. seven days a week and is available to “answer questions and explain eligibility regarding leaves of absences, assist in completing paperwork, and support employees in any way possible.” This information was also posted on the PFQ SharePoint staff intranet site.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Monday, March 16, 2020**

PFQ Communications office sent an email to all staff reminding them of our focus on education; and that almost daily we are posting new information on the Coronavirus page of the SharePoint staff intranet site. The communication went onto state: "The Communication committee of the Coronavirus Task Force has produced materials focusing on hygiene and preventative measures. We will continue to provide other resources as events warrant."

**Tuesday, March 17, 2020**

Third meeting of the PFQ Coronavirus Task Force.

**Tuesday, March 17, 2020**

Exceptional Adventures cancels trips and social events for the remainder of March and April. Exceptional Adventures staff redeploys efforts and resources in two ways: staff makes regular calls to all residential sites, doing wellness checks on persons supported and staff. Secondly, staff helps create activity opportunities for those at residential sites. The daily "Stir Crazy Fun Challenge" is emailed (and posted on the Exceptional Adventures Facebook page) daily, containing exercises, brain teasers, games and fun themed activities.

**Wednesday, March 18, 2020**

PFQ Coronavirus Task Force begins **daily "pulse" conference calls**. The focus of the daily calls is regular monitoring of: Client health (possible Coronavirus symptoms); Staff health (possible Coronavirus symptoms); Adequate personal protection equipment and other hygienic supplies; the use and effectiveness of telehealth as a means of delivering support to behavioral health clients.

Task Force full-meeting conference calls discussing a wider range of topics still occur once per week (every Wednesday), or more often, as needed.

**Thursday, March 19, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger and Director of Communications Greg Jena compose and send letters to Governor Tom Wolf, federal & local lawmakers, and state health agencies expressing concern over lack of guidance, personal protection equipment and hygienic supplies.

**Friday, March 20, 2020**

Allegheny Children's Initiative closes its office and transfers all work to being done remotely and via telehealth.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Friday, March 20, 2020**

PFQ participation in webinar for Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs expanding services to Intellectual and Developmental Disability services through Appendix K of Waiver services. Appendix K is the Medicaid Emergency & Preparedness Response guidelines.

**Monday, March 23, 2020**

The majority of PFQ administrative staff (and subsidiary administrative staff) begin working from home, in the interest of safety. This is made possible by PFQ I.T. staff creating Virtual Private Network (VPN) access for staff.

**Monday, March 23, 2020**

PFQ facility staff redeployed to visit residential programs and ensure mail delivery to administrative headquarters office, to continue providing needed items (petty cash).

**Monday, March 23, 2020**

In an effort to recognize and address the anxiety staff may be experiencing over the pandemic, a "Guide to Resources" was released to staff, via email and on the SharePoint staff intranet site. This guide includes information on support services provided by Cigna and UPMC Health Plan (depending on which coverage staff have); along with information on Milestone HCQU West's free app. The app has a dedicated section with Coronavirus educational information.

**Monday, March 23, 2020**

"Six Steps to Ease Children's Fears and Anxieties About Coronavirus", an expert guide to addressing young peoples' concerns, was posted on the Partners For Quality Facebook page. The piece was written by Allegheny Children's Initiative psychologist David McAnallen.

**Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

PFQ Compliance department develops and implements residential status reports to monitor shortages and provide resources as necessary. In addition, all residential locations are contacted twice per week.

**Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

Citizen Care Executive Director Elmer Nemeth sends a communication to staff indicating that direct support staff will receive incentive payment for providing life-sustaining care during the pandemic.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

Weekly Task Force meeting:

- Essential Services tracking chart for open residential sites rolled out (identifying critical infrastructure and needs of programs).
- Application made for Waiver retainer payments.
- Remote programmatic meetings established weekly to ensure expanded communication.

**Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

Milestone Centers' Executive Director Gary Bell sends a correspondence to all staff, updating them on the efforts of the PFQ Coronavirus Task Force, and reinforcing information about what programs and service lines remain functional. A similar letter to Milestone stakeholders is posted on the MilestonePA.org website and Milestone Facebook page.

**Thursday, March 26, 2020**

Citizen Care initiates weekly "update calls" with its board of directors.

**Friday, March 27, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger produces a video message to all staff, thanking them for their hard work and dedication during this pandemic; and updating them on the efforts of the task force. This message was distributed to staff via the "EZ Texting" website, and posted on the SharePoint staff intranet site.

**Friday, March 27, 2020**

Milestone HCQU West Director Natalie Symons, RN, produces a reminder video for staff about the importance of – and proper ways of – handwashing. This was distributed via email and posted on the SharePoint staff intranet site.

**Monday, March 30, 2020**

PFQ Fiscal department participates in statewide retainer payment initiatives to ensure financial stability.

**Monday, March 30, 2020**

Intellectual and Developmental Disability programs develop and implement Appendix K changes to Waiver services. Appendix K is the Medicaid Emergency & Preparedness Response guidelines.



## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Monday, March 30, 2020**

PFQ develops draft of comprehensive Covid-19 Plan, including draft policies and procedures associated with staffing, personal protective equipment, revised sick/paid time off (PTO) policy, OSHA, Essential Employee programs, staff and consumer screening for symptoms, etc.

### **Tuesday, March 31, 2020**

Citizen Care direct support staff receive incentive payment for providing life-sustaining care during the pandemic.

### **Tuesday, March 31, 2020**

Milestone Centers Executive Director Gary Bell sends a communication to staff indicating that direct support staff will receive incentive payment for providing life-sustaining care during the pandemic.

### **Tuesday, March 31, 2020**

PFQ meets with its insurance broker, USI, to discuss business interruption and create a comprehensive plan to continue to provide stability to its subsidiaries.

### **Thursday, April 2, 2020**

Letter to PFQ stakeholders from CEO Maggie Rothenberger provides updates on work of the Coronavirus Task Force, and details what steps have been/are being taken in the wake of the pandemic. This update includes listing of what services/programs have been temporarily suspended, and those that remain active and open. Also posted on PFQ.org & MilestonePA.org websites, along with PFQ and Milestone Facebook pages.

### **Thursday, April 2, 2020**

Citizen Care conducts weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Friday, April 3, 2020**

Milestone Centers direct support staff receive incentive payment for providing life-sustaining care during the pandemic.

### **Friday, April 3, 2020**

PFQ Human Resources office distributes Coronavirus Disaster Relief Policy.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Friday, April 3, 2020**

Based on Gov. Tom Wolf's recommendation that residents wear masks when going out, PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sent an email to all staff supporting the Governor's recommendation and including guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health on how to make homemade masks.

**Sunday, April 5, 2020**

Implementation / training of staff to self-monitor for fever and other symptoms of the Covid-19 disease; in order to prevent staff from coming to work ill.

**Monday, April 6, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sent a message to all staff stressing the importance of utilizing homemade fabric masks. The message reminded staff that, despite requests, PFQ and its agencies are still in need of medical-grade masks. This message included an instruction video from the U.S. Surgeon General on how to make a homemade fabric mask (no sewing required), along with Homemade Mask Guidance from the PA Department of Health. Information materials were also posted on the intranet SharePoint staff site.

**Monday, April 6, 2020**

Link to a video with useful Social Distancing tips sent to all staff via the EZ Texting system. Link to video also posted on the intranet SharePoint staff site.

**Tuesday, April 7, 2020**

A full status of Allegheny Children's Initiative (ACI) services during the pandemic was posted to the ACI page of the PFQ.org website. This information was also posted on the PFQ Facebook page.

**Tuesday, April 7, 2020**

Despite strict adherence to Centers for Disease Control guidelines on hygiene and social distancing, a person supported at one of Citizen Care's residential sites tested positive for Coronavirus. The diagnosis was confirmed while the individual was hospitalized. Partners For Quality reported the diagnosis to the appropriate state and county agencies (as required); to staff and board members; and issued a media statement.

**Wednesday, April 8, 2020**

Due to a person supported testing positive for Coronavirus, PFQ enacted its comprehensive exposure plan and supports to the affected home. This included: distribution of N95 masks, surgical masks, goggles and enhanced disinfecting guidelines.

## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Wednesday, April 8, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sent a communication to all staff, reminding them of adhering to HIPAA regulations and especially how they relate to social media.

### **Wednesday, April 8, 2020**

Weekly Task Force meeting:

- Reduced community home staffing is reviewed for all residential sites, according to Appendix K. Appendix K is the Medicaid Emergency & Preparedness Response guidelines.
- Personal protective equipment internal tracking system implemented.
- PFQ applies for local emergency grants, on behalf of subsidiaries.

### **Thursday, April 9, 2020**

*Re-post:* "Six Steps to Ease Children's Fears and Anxieties About Coronavirus", an expert guide to addressing young peoples' concerns, was re-posted on the Partners For Quality Facebook page. The piece was written by Allegheny Children's Initiative psychologist David McAnallen.

### **Thursday, April 9, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Friday, April 10, 2020**

PFQ distributed surgical masks to all Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), with guidance for usage and care of the masks. DSPs were encouraged to wear homemade fabric masks over surgical masks.

### **Friday, April 10, 2020**

Links to two educational videos were sent to staff via the EZ Text system: One, done by a nurse, explains the dangers of Cross Contamination & glove use. The other explained Intertwined Social Distancing; and specifically how a staff home and our residential home rely on each other during direct care.

### **Tuesday, April 14, 2020**

Citizen Care Executive Director Elmer Nemeth sent a communication to Residential Management, Habilitative and Professional staff that they will receive a one-time bonus payment on Friday April 17. This bonus is in appreciation of staff performance and dedication during the pandemic.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Wednesday, April 15, 2020**

Weekly Task Force meeting:

- Guidance for extended mask use/wearing distributed to staff.
- Discussion about forming additional task force sub-committees, to plan processes for eventual re-opening of day programs and offices.

**Thursday, April 16, 2020**

Implementation of procedure for managers and supervisors to check staff at beginning of shifts for fever and other symptoms of the Covid-19 disease.

**Thursday, April 16, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

**Thursday, April 16, 2020**

On April 7, a person supported at a Citizen Care group home was diagnosed with Coronavirus. As of today (April 16), two of his three housemates had also tested positive and were hospitalized. The fourth has now been hospitalized with symptoms but not yet tested. Staff in the home have been issued N-95 masks (along with surgical masks) and continue to follow all social distancing and hygienic guidelines.

**Friday, April 17, 2020**

The person supported in the above entry (who had just been hospitalized) tested positive for Coronavirus, and now all four of the individuals supported in that same home are hospitalized. Additionally, one contracted staff (not a Citizen Care employee) who had worked in the house also tested positive. The house has been closed for the time being and is being professionally cleaned and sanitized. Citizen Care staff who work in that house are self-isolating and self-monitoring at home, with pay. Partners For Quality is working with the County and State to develop protocol for when these individuals return home. Additionally, a statement about the diagnoses and house closure was sent to local media by the PFQ Communications office.

**Monday, April 20, 2020**

In response to the announcement on Thursday (April 17) about all four residents of a Citizen Care community living home being diagnosed with Coronavirus, PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger authored a letter to families. Assuring that staff continue to take all precautionary measures, the letter was posted on the PFQ.org website, the PFQ Facebook page, and distributed via Constant Contact and to family members of persons supported.

## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Wednesday, April 22, 2020**

Weekly Task Force meeting:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) secured for next six weeks, and new PPE burn rate identified. (Burn rate tracks how quickly the PPE supply is depleted).
- New Day Program and Office subcommittees formed to meet and start discussing what is needed to re-open programs and offices whenever PA Governor Wolf's stay-at-home order is lifted.

### **Wednesday, April 22, 2020**

Extensive research on necessary additions to the PFQ PPE stockpile is conducted, and as a result, additional resources are requested.

### **Wednesday, April 22, 2020**

Partners For Quality Facebook page posts its latest "thank you" to the generous individuals who have donated home made masks to our family of agencies. Like many providers, PFQ is finding masks to be in short supply. This post followed similar "thank you" posts on April 15, April 17 and April 20. Mask donations are being handled by the Partners For Quality Foundation.

### **Thursday, April 23, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Thursday, April 23, 2020**

A photo collage of persons supported by Citizen Care is shared with Citizen Care staff – and posted on the PFQ Facebook page. The collage depicts persons holding signs to make the phrase "To the world you may be direct support professionals, but to us you are superheroes."

### **Monday, April 27, 2020**

A person supported from a Citizen Care community integrated living residence died over the weekend, after being hospitalized for three weeks with a Coronavirus diagnosis. (He was one of the four referenced in previous timeline entries). After following protocol of notifying next of kin and appropriate reporting agencies, PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sent a video message about this news to all staff; and all board of directors were notified. Following staff and board members, a brief statement was released to the media.

## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Monday, April 27, 2020**

In response to the announcement on Thursday (April 17) about all four residents of a Citizen Care community living home being diagnosed with Coronavirus, PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger authored a letter to families. Assuring that staff continue to take all precautionary measures, the letter was posted on the PFQ.org website, the PFQ Facebook page, and distributed via Constant Contact and to family members of persons supported.

### **Monday, April 27, 2020**

Implementation of procedure for staff to take and document their temperatures prior to leaving for work; Managers and Supervisors continue to take temps and check for symptoms upon staff's arrival at work .

### **Tuesday, April 28, 2020**

A photo collage of managers and staff from Milestone Centers is shared with Milestone staff – and posted on the Milestone Facebook page. The collage depicts staff holding signs to make the phrase “Milestone front line staff, hang in there! We are all in this together.”

### **Tuesday, April 28, 2020**

Formalization of re-opening subcommittees and additional bi-weekly meetings scheduled.

First meeting of Office Re-Opening subcommittee held. This committee will meet every other Tuesday, going forward.

### **Wednesday, April 29, 2020**

Weekly Task Force meeting

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) secured for eight weeks, considering current burn rate.

### **Thursday, April 30, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Thursday, April 30, 2020**

Party held for persons supported who recovered from Coronavirus; food and party supplies delivered to house.

### **Monday, May 4, 2020**

First meeting of Programs Re-Opening subcommittee held. This committee will meet every other Monday, going forward.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Wednesday, May 6, 2020**

A second person supported by Citizen Care died early this morning from complications of Coronavirus. (He was a member of the house where all four residents were diagnosed and hospitalized with Covid-19. Two of the residents are back home and considered recuperated). Boards of directors were notified by Elmer Nemeth (Citizen Care Executive Director) and PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger. Maggie Rothenberger recorded a video message for all staff that was distributed via EZ Text as well as posted on the My PFQ staff intranet site. An update letter from Rothenberger was also prepared and sent out to families of persons supported. Lastly, after all necessary family and reporting agencies were notified, PFQ sent a brief statement to the media.

In light of this news, weekly Task Force meeting cancelled; daily “pulse call” held instead.

**Thursday, May 7, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

**Friday, May 8, 2020**

Partners For Quality answered a call from Pennsylvania Advocacy & Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities (PAR) to make stakeholders’ voices heard. Several family members of persons supported recorded brief videos advocating for our Direct Support Professionals. The videos were submitted to PAR, which in turn is delivering the videos to PA Gov. Tom Wolf and members of the Pennsylvania legislature.

**Monday, May 11, 2020**

In light of the Pennsylvania legislature conducting Coronavirus-related budget negotiations, PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sent a letter to state officials requesting additional funding for intellectual disability services and supports, and additional funding for direct support professional wages in this budget. Maggie’s letter was sent to:  
Governor Tom Wolf (and his chief of staff); Lt. Gov. John Fetterman’s Executive Assistant; PA Speaker of the House Mike Turzai; and PA state representatives and state senators in the areas served by the Partners For Quality family of agencies.

## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Thursday, May 14, 2020**

Milestone Centers Health Care Quality Unit (HCQU) Northwest produced a video webinar “The Benefits of Laughter.” It addresses how laughter can contribute to staying healthy during the pandemic. The video was posted on the PFQ YouTube channel, the PFQ.org website and on the Coronavirus page of the My PFQ staff intranet site.

### **Thursday, May 14, 2020**

A photo collage featuring members of the Citizen Care board of directors, showing their appreciation of and support to staff, was distributed to staff. The collage was also posted on the My PFQ staff intranet site; and will be posted on the PFQ Facebook page on Friday, May 15. The message in the collage read: “Citizen Care awesome staff, keep up your great work! Thank you for all you do!”

### **Thursday, May 14, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Monday, May 18, 2020**

PFQ Coronavirus Task Force alters “Pulse Call” schedule, in light of (1) our agencies’ progress during this pandemic and (2) Allegheny and most surrounding counties being moved to “Yellow” status. Pulse Calls will now be held on Mondays and Fridays, with a full Task Force conference call continuing on Wednesdays. Additional daily calls will take place if/when needed.

### **Wednesday, May 20, 2020**

Weekly Task Force meeting held. A major component of the Task Force meetings moving forward will be planning and preparation for the eventual re-opening of day program and office sites.

### **Thursday, May 21, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.



## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Tuesday, May 26, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sent letters to U.S. Senators Bob Casey and Pat Toomey regarding the HEROES Act recently passed by the House. Rothenberger's letters urged the senators to support passage of the bill, which would provide increased funding for home and community-based services; identification of Direct Support Professionals as "essential workers"; and additional funding for the Public Health & Social Services Emergency Fund. Designation as essential workers would provide direct support professionals increased wages capitalized by the "Heroes Fund."

### **Thursday, May 28, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Friday, May 29, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sends a detailed memo to staff at all agencies, reinforcing PFQ's Mask and Visitor policies. Rothenberger's message clearly outlined the importance of following all hygienic and preventative guidelines – reminding staff that as licensed agencies, all PFQ organizations are required to follow protocol established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Allegheny County.

### **Monday, June 1, 2020**

Petra Mussi, Citizen Care's Executive Director of Community Living, prepared a letter to be sent to persons supported and their families, outlining the process of clients returning to Citizen Care. Some individuals in our Community Living settings chose to stay at their family's homes during the pandemic. This letter not only welcomes them back but stresses the strict safety measures put into place to ensure their return is safe, healthy and easy.

### **Monday, June 1, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sent a letter to PA Governor Tom Wolf, along with PA Senators and Representatives from the PFQ service area, thanking them for their support and passage of the CARES act, which will provide approximately \$260 million in funds to support 50,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the commonwealth.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Tuesday, June 2, 2020**

Gary Bell, Executive Director of Milestone Centers, prepared a letter to be sent to persons supported and their families, outlining the preparations being taken for clients' eventual return to Milestone. This letter stresses the strict safety measures being put into place to ensure their return is safe, healthy and easy.

**Tuesday, June 2, 2020**

Sarah Blonski, Executive Director of Exceptional Adventures, prepared a letter to be sent to guests and travelers, outlining the preparations being taken for guests' eventual return to Exceptional Adventures trips and activities. This letter stresses the strict safety measures being put into place to ensure their return is safe, healthy and easy. The letter includes a traveler survey, asking guests their feelings and intentions on returned to various Exceptional Adventures' activities.

**Wednesday, June 3, 2020**

Elmer Nemeth, Executive Director of Citizen Care, and Julie Bulgarelli, Director of Citizen Care Learning, Employment and Retirement Services (day programs), prepared a letter to be sent to persons supported and their families, outlining the preparations being taken for clients' eventual return to Citizen Care day programs. This letter stresses the strict safety measures being put into place to ensure their return is safe, healthy and easy.

**Thursday, June 4, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

**Monday, June 8, 2020**

PFQ agencies purchased and distributed social distancing floor decals. These decals are being placed in Allegheny Children's Initiative, Citizen Care and Milestone Centers day program and office sites, to direct social distancing and enhance safety once these sites are re-open.

## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Tuesday, June 9, 2020**

Exceptional Adventures began a series of “Parking Lot Activities”, scheduled for the PFQ parking lot in Robinson; and a Milestone lot in Monroeville. Activities include bingo, crafts and dances. All events implement social distancing and strict hygienic practices. These events give persons supported an opportunity to get out and safely have fun with peers. Events are scheduled through July.

### **Wednesday, June 10, 2020**

As a result of the PA Legislature passing a resolution to end Gov. Wolf’s Coronavirus emergency declaration, a text message was sent to all staff to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding. The message stated that all PFQ safety measures remain in-place and unchanged, including mask, visitor and cleaning policies, because of the fact that safety of our clients and staff are our highest priority.

### **Thursday, June 11, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Wednesday, June 17, 2020**

Among topics discussed in the weekly Task Force full meeting: Allegheny Children’s Initiative is re-opening offices on June 22; Milestone Centers plans to re-open offices and sites on July 8; Citizen Care plans to re-open offices and sites on July 13. Detailed plans are being worked on to ensure hygiene, social distancing and safety. Letters have been sent to persons supported and/or their families outlining safety measures.

### **Thursday, June 18, 2020**

*A PFQ and Subsidiary Community Activity Policy and an updated PFQ and Subsidiary Visitor Policy were posted on the policies page of the My PFQ staff intranet site and released to staff via email.*

### **Thursday, June 18, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Tuesday, June 23, 2020**

*An updated PFQ Covid-19 Testing Reporting was posted on the policies page of the My PFQ staff intranet site and released to staff via email.*

## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Thursday, June 25, 2020**

Link to comprehensive list of Allegheny County Coronavirus testing sites added to the Coronavirus page of PFQ's staff intranet site.

### **Thursday, June 25, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Monday, June 29, 2020**

Updated procedures for Daily Temperature and Symptom checks for persons support were uploaded to the Coronavirus page of PFQ's employee intranet site.

### **Monday, June 29, 2020**

Milestone Centers' executive leadership decided to push back its opening date to Monday, July 20. This decision was made as a precaution in light of recent Coronavirus numbers being on the rise in Allegheny County.

### **Thursday, July 2, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Wednesday, July 8, 2020**

During the weekly Coronavirus Task Force meeting, there were several updates shared about the postponement of opening our agencies' office and program sites. Due to the recent rise in Coronavirus cases in Allegheny County (and across the state), the majority of staff will keep working from home day program openings are on hold. The Partners For Quality family of agencies continue to operate on a "safety first" standard, following all CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health and Allegheny County Health Department guidelines.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Thursday, July 9, 2020**

In light of the recent discovery that a contracted direct support professional at Citizen Care was discovered to not be wearing a mask while on the job – and subsequently tested positive for Coronavirus – CEO Maggie Rothenberger recorded an urgent message that was texted to all staff. The message, which also addressed the discovery that some of our own direct support staff were not following the mask policy, emphasized the fact that wearing a surgical mask while on the job is mandatory. Also, Maggie included in her message that unannounced random spot visits by managers and supervisors will be made to agency community living sites effective immediately. Those found to be in violation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Thursday, July 9, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

**Friday, July 10, 2020**

A short educational video about the proper way to wear a mask (produced by UPMC) was posted to the Coronavirus page of the My PFQ staff intranet site.

**Thursday, July 16, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

**Thursday, July 16, 2020**

On Wednesday, July 15, six persons supported at three Citizen Care community living homes tested positive for Coronavirus. Although not showing symptoms, these individuals were tested out of an abundance of caution, after a third party contracted staff tested positive. All individuals are being quarantined at home and staff in the affected site are utilizing N-95 masks, along with all other precautions prescribed by the CDC and the Allegheny County Health Department. As it has done in the past, PFQ was proactive in issuing a statement to the media. Notification was also sent to all staff and the boards of directors, including a specific communication from Elmer Nemeth to Citizen Care staff, addressing the course of events and their concerns.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Tuesday, July 21 and Thursday, July 23, 2020**

Partners For Quality and its family of agencies hosted hiring events, with immediate on-site interviews. Events were advertised and promoted ahead of time. Events took place 1-6 p.m. each day: Tuesday's event at the PFQ administrative building in Robinson; Thursday's event at Penn Center in Monroeville. While many positions are open, the main focus was filling crucial direct support professional positions.

**Thursday, July 23, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

**Friday, July 24, 2020**

An updated list of Coronavirus symptoms (as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) was produced and posted on the PFQ staff intranet site for use by staff. Director of Communications Greg Jena informed all members of the PFQ Coronavirus Task Force that the updated list had been posted on the staff site.

**Week of July 27, 2020**

In light of the recent positive cases at three Citizen Care residential sites, PFQ arranged for all staff who had worked and are working in those sites to be tested. This decision was made in the interest of caution and safety.

**Wednesday, July 29, 2020**

Throughout the month of July, Covid-19 test results from community resources (i.e. local health clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, /aka FQHCs), Med Express locations, LabCorp, and drive-through pharmacy sites were not meeting Partners For Quality's (PFQ) needs regarding speed of results. Average wait times for results were holding around one week, hurting our ability to manage isolated virus outbreaks and protect the individuals we support. Although no new hospitalizations occurred, we were deeply concerned about these wait times leading to reduced containment.

On July 29, 2020, Partners For Quality officially began operating our own internal testing program for individuals and staff. PFQ, in partnership with MHS Laboratories of Monroeville, tested our first twenty-four staff that day, using our PFQ parking lot in Robinson as a makeshift drive-through testing facility. The following day, nine individuals were tested, and all persons also received second tests with 7-10 days, based on different circumstances related to their worksites' potential exposure date. *(This entry continued next page)*

## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Wednesday, July 29, 2020** *(continued from page 22)*

The process has been conducted and overseen by Citizen Care Director of Nursing Ariel Murphy, RN. So far, based on potential exposure or symptomology, we have tested more than one hundred staff and individuals, (each two times) who live and work in the Citizen Care and Milestone Residential programs. We also added another test site, the Milestone Centers' Webb Building in Wilkesburg will be utilized for tests in eastern Allegheny County and Milestone nursing staff will be administering the tests.

Due to the nature of our process, which involves test site to lab same-day drop off, we have reduced our average wait time down to 28 hours, with some results coming as quickly as 18 hours from administration. This arrangement is unique amongst providers of our type.

### **Thursday, July 30, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

### **Friday, July 31, 2020**

Three guideline documents issued by the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) were distributed to the PFQ Coronavirus Task Force and added to the staff intranet site. The documents are:

- Notifying Designated Persons and Providers of an Individual's COVID-19 Exposure or Diagnosis
- Guidance on Masks, Screening, and Handwashing
- Guidance for Community Participation Support Providers in Counties in the Green Phase of the Process to Reopen Pennsylvania.

### **Wednesday, August 5, 2020**

Milestone Centers' day programs that support persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities re-opened to a portion of the clients who regularly attend. Careful safety and hygienic protocols were communicated to all participants ahead of time. Persons supported who are able to successfully wear masks and practice social distancing were invited to be the first to return.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Thursday, August 6, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger added her signature to letters signed by fellow provider CEOs, that were sent to Pennsylvania U.S. Senators Pat Toomey and Bob Casey. The letters, prepared by Pennsylvania Advocacy Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability (PAR), urge Senate leadership to make Home and Community Based Services the top priority for COVID-19 relief funding.

**Thursday, August 6, 2020**

Citizen Care holds weekly update call with its board of directors.

**Wednesday, August 12, 2020**

Citizen Care sent a letter to families of persons supported, communicating a summary of activities undertaken by Citizen Care departments in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Monday, August 31, 2020**

Citizen Care's day programs that support persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities re-opened to a portion of the clients who regularly attend. Careful safety and hygienic protocols were communicated to all participants ahead of time. Persons supported who are able to successfully wear masks and practice social distancing were invited to be the first to return.

**Thursday, September 3, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger sent a letter to all the Pennsylvania state reps in the PFQ family of agencies service area. This letter urges their support of House Bill 2798: Current law requires a three-year refresh of market-based data in order to adopt a fee schedule, but there is no requirement for Pennsylvania to change rates at all - no matter what happens to inflation. For many providers, even a small inflationary increase often has troubling ramifications.

House Bill 2798 will help stabilize this workforce and provide better care for individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism. Passage of this bill means rates will annually be set based on a national market consumer index. A Facebook post asking the public to contact their legislator and urge support for the bill will post on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020.



## Crisis Timeline 2020

### **Thursday, September 3, 2020**

The Pennsylvania Dept. of Human Services issued an informational flier for the new Team PA Coronavirus Crisis Counseling hotline. This is a free 24/7 service. The flier was posted on the My PFQ intranet staff site and emailed to all staff.

### **Friday, September 4, 2020**

Citizen Care sent an update letter to families of persons supported, communicating the latest summary of activities undertaken by Citizen Care departments in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Included in this letter was the reopening of Citizen Care's day programs on August 31.

### **Tuesday, September 15, 2020**

As the result of an idea from a recent Task Force meeting, the PFQ Communications office sent an email to all staff with an informational flier reminding employees that the pandemic is not over. The flier cites the re-opening of schools, colleges and the capacity increase in restaurants to 50%. It also includes a graphic showing how one infected person can cause a chain of infection in others. Staff are urged to continue wearing masks and practice stringent hygiene. The information and flier were also posted on the My PFQ staff intranet site.

### **Thursday, September 17, 2020**

Using an email tool provided by the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger joined other providers in putting pressure on Congress to remain at the negotiating table until an agreement is reached on a Covid-19 relief package. The message calls for increased funding for increasing funding for Medicaid disability supports and states. The reality is that agencies that employ Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) to deliver community-based services have been forced to make impossible choices to ensure the sustainability of supports. Without desperately-needed funding, many may not stay afloat through the winter, leaving people with disabilities with too few options and resources to live independently and in the community. The timing of the effort is significant, as this is Direct Support Professionals Appreciation week.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Tuesday, September 22, 2020**

Letters from PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger were sent to all Pennsylvania representatives in the districts covering PFQ agency service areas. These letters urge legislators to appropriate \$270 million CARES Act dollars to support I&DD provider agencies and Direct Support Professionals to help keep services secure through the end of the calendar year.

**Thursday, October 1, 2020**

Citizen Care sent an update letter to families of persons supported, communicating the latest summary of activities undertaken by Citizen Care departments in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Included in this letter was mention of the resumption of some social activities by the In-Home and Community Supports program.

**Friday, October 2, 2020**

A video message reminding staff to wear masks and practice safety was texted to all staff – and posted on the staff intranet site. The short video is made up of messages from staff and persons supported alike.

**Tuesday, October 6, 2020**

Partners For Quality participated in the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) “Social Media Action Day.” Correspondence was sent to local federal lawmakers on behalf of CEO Maggie Rothenberger, along with a Facebook post urging people to take action as well. The message said that “today is #ForgottenFaces social media day of action, telling lawmakers to put people over politics and fund essential Medicaid disability programs.

Direct Support Professionals at the Partners For Quality family of agencies help the individuals we serve stay safe during the pandemic. Urge your lawmakers to put people over politics so the Medicaid programs that fund our work can survive the pandemic.

Join us by taking two minutes to send a pre-written message to your members of Congress on this issue! <http://amplifier.ancor.org/>

Thank you!”

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Tuesday, October 13, 2020**

Following a positive Coronavirus test of staff from Milestone Centers' New Horizon Senior Center, the day program was temporarily closed. Staff who may have been subject to direct exposure are being tested; and staff who had possible secondary or tertiary exposure are being issued N-95 masks till further notice.

Clients who may have been subject to secondary or tertiary exposure are being closely monitored. All necessary reporting agencies and families were notified. Milestone Executive Director Gary Bell issued a communication to all staff about the incident.

**Wednesday, October 14, 2020**

A video of CEO Maggie Rothenberger getting her annual flu shot, along with Maggie urging all staff to get a flu vaccine, was shared with all staff via the EZ Texting system.

**Friday, October 16, 2020**

Following positive Coronavirus test results for a staff member at Citizen Care's Training and Outsourcing Center, and a person supported who attends Citizen Care's Center for Creative Opportunities, both programs were temporarily closed. Staff who may have been subject to direct exposure are being tested; and staff who had possible secondary or tertiary exposure are being issued N-95 masks till further notice.

Clients who may have been subject to secondary or tertiary exposure are being closely monitored. All necessary reporting agencies and families were notified. Citizen Care Executive Director Gary Bell issued a communication to all staff about the incident.

**Wednesday, October 21, 2020**

As of this day, there were a total of nine people (combination of staff and persons supported) from Citizen Care that tested positive for Coronavirus; and a total of nine people (combination of staff and persons supported) from Milestone Centers that tested positive for Coronavirus. In addition, more than 100 tests (staff and persons supported) are being conducted in the interest of safety. Special meetings of the Task Force have been taking place almost daily to address these outbreaks.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Thursday, October 22, 2020**

The Centers for Disease Control issued guidelines for holiday season travel. Guidelines include considering the size and location of the gatherings. The CDC also recommended that those who have been exposed to Coronavirus and those at higher risk refrain from attending. The guidelines were shared with all staff via email and posted on the staff intranet site.

**Friday, October 30, 2020**

Pennsylvania Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine urged Pennsylvanians to greatly limit holiday gatherings with family and friends – suggesting that gatherings be kept to those only living in the same home. Dr. Levine urged everyone to connect with other loved ones virtually. The guidelines were shared with all staff via email and posted on the staff intranet site.

**Monday, November 1, 2020**

In Citizen Care's monthly update letter to families of persons supported, it was noted that policies and procedures continue to reflect guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs. Citizen Care's In-Home and Community Support Services has resumed the weekly social group "Cool Guy & Cool Girls". The groups have been meeting for outdoor activities once per week, focusing on socialization and exercise. Future planned activities include bowling, bingo and movies. Additionally, participants are maintaining "Dream Journals," where they document life goals and how they will achieve them.

Learning, Employment & Retirement Services (LERS) day programs are operating at approximately 25% capacity, utilizing a phase-in approach out of an abundance of caution. As noted above, two of the programs closed temporarily due to Coronavirus cases but have since reopened.

The letter also noted the efforts of Partners For Quality subsidiary Exceptional Adventures presenting outdoor parking lot activities – and it's planned Virtual New Year's Eve celebration.

**Wednesday, November 4, 2020**

Recent additions to the staff intranet Coronavirus resource page have included a Holiday Travel and Gathering Guide (issued by the Centers for Disease Control) and a "I Wear a Mask Because..." video, also provided by the CDC.

Coronavirus Task Force meetings continue as noted earlier in this report: full task force meetings each Wednesday, with "pulse calls" on Mondays and Fridays. Emergency situation meetings are conducted as needed.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Thursday, November 5, 2020**

A provider briefing presented by the Allegheny County Health Department included the fact that personal protective supplies, thermometers and hygienic materials are still available to providers, at no cost, through [Global Links](#). As a result, PFQ is placing an order with Global Links on behalf of its member agencies.

**Wednesday, November 11, 2020**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger recorded a video message to all staff, with an urgent update regarding the pandemic. Maggie discussed the rapid rise in local Coronavirus cases, coupled with the fact that colder weather will force us all indoors (which increases exposure risk). This video message was posted to the staff intranet site and distributed to staff via the EZ Text system.

**Tuesday, November 17, 2020**

In light of rising Coronavirus cases (and rising positivity rates) in Allegheny County, both Citizen Care and Milestone Centers made the decision to close all day program sites in the interest of safety. Letters to families/persons supported and to staff were prepared and sent.

**Thursday, November 19 – Friday, November 20, 2020**

In light of rising Coronavirus cases (and rising positivity rates) in Allegheny County, Partners For Quality created informational fliers for staff. The fliers were distributed mainly to staff at Citizen Care and Milestone Centers, as they have community living sites. The fliers cover: Staff Covid-19 Symptom Checklist; Guidelines for traveling out of state; Holiday season travel guide (CDC); CDC guidelines for those who live in close quarters; CDC guidelines for stopping the spread of germs.

**Monday, November 23, 2020**

The General Mask Policy covering all Partners For Quality agencies was updated to reflect that anyone driving agency vehicles, or transporting persons supported are required to wear masks. The updated policy was emailed to all staff and was posted to the My PFQ staff intranet site.

**Crisis Timeline 2020****Tuesday, December 8, 2020**

Two advocacy letters were sent by CEO Maggie Rothenberger:

- A letter to PA Governor Tom Wolf, urging his administration to classify persons with intellectual & developmental disabilities (IDD) - and their direct caregivers - as priority 1A for the Coronavirus vaccine. The letter cited the fact that this vulnerable population is twice as likely to die if contracting the virus. The letter was carbon copied to: Dr. Rachel Levine, PA Secretary of Health; Teresa Miller, PA Secretary of Human Services; and Kristin Ahrens PA Deputy Secretary, Office of Developmental Programs.
- A letter to Kristin Ahrens PA Deputy Secretary, Office of Developmental Programs, asking that ODP update its payment rates to providers for fiscal year 2020-2021, in light of the fact that current rates are not sufficient to cover expenses necessary to provide mandated services.

**Wednesday, December 9, 2020**

The CDC issued a number of new educational fliers about how people can care for themselves during the pandemic. These were added to the Coronavirus page of the My PFQ staff intranet site.

**Monday, December 21, 2020**

The Coronavirus Task Force Vaccine Subcommittee created a survey for staff (Survey Monkey) to ascertain the interest on the part of Direct Support staff to receive the Covid vaccine. Gathering this data is needed an estimated head count can be given to our pharmacy partners CVS and Walgreens, once the vaccine is available to us. A link to the survey was sent to direct support staff at Citizen Care and Milestone Centers via the EZ Text system. Included in the text was a link to vaccine questions & answers from the Centers for Disease Control.

**Wednesday, December 23, 2020**

Reminder text sent to Citizen Care and Milestone Centers direct support staff, to complete the Covid vaccine survey.

**Monday, December 28, 2020**

Reminder text sent to Citizen Care and Milestone Centers direct support staff, to complete the Covid vaccine survey.

**Crisis Timeline 2020-2021****Thursday, December 31, 2020**

CEO Maggie Rothenberger and Milestone Centers medical director Dr. Ken Thompson recorded a video discussing the Covid vaccine. Dr. Thompson discussed the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. Link to this video was sent to Citizen Care and Milestone direct support staff via the EZ Texting system. The video was also posted on the My PFQ staff intranet site.

**Tuesday, January 5, 2021**

An email was sent to all staff, along with an EZ Text to all Citizen Care and Milestone direct support staff, asking them to update their contact information in the Paychex system. Paychex is thought to be a more effective (and less expensive) means of disseminating information to all staff, considering not all employees have email access. Having updated contact information will enable our agencies to share important information with staff in a timely manner. This is especially important when it comes to sharing information about Coronavirus and vaccines.

**Tuesday, January 5, 2021**

Re-texted to direct support staff: CEO Maggie Rothenberger and Milestone Centers medical director Dr. Ken Thompson recorded a video discussing the Covid vaccine. Dr. Thompson discussed the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. Link to this video was sent to Citizen Care and Milestone direct support staff via the EZ Texting system.

**Friday, January 8, 2021**

A brief video featuring a physician who specializes in quality and patient safety was sent to direct support professionals at Citizen Care and Milestone. The video addresses and facts (and safety) about the COVID-19 vaccines. This was sent via the EZ Texting system in an effort to equip staff with information to make informed decisions about the vaccine.

**Week of January 11, 2021**

Thanks to commitments from CVS Pharmacy and Hilltop Pharmacy (in Pittsburgh's Allentown neighborhood), PFQ scheduled Covid vaccination clinics for all staff and persons supported. Clinics are scheduled for Jan. 21 & 22 at Milestone Centers' Enterprise location in Monroeville and Jan. 23 at the PFQ administrative building in McKees Rocks. Details were shared with staff, along with instructions on how to sign up for vaccination.

## Crisis Timeline 2021

### **Friday, January 15, 2021**

A flier was distributed to all staff – and posted on the staff intranet site – encouraging those who recovered from Covid to donate plasma. Donated plasma from those who have recovered is known to help current Coronavirus patients recover. PFQ is offering a \$100 incentive for staff who donate. The flier contained information on local plasma donation centers.

### **Monday, January 19, 2021**

A New York Times article about the benefits, safety and effectiveness of the Covid vaccine was shared with all staff via the EZ Texting system.

### **Friday, January 22, 2021**

Partners For Quality was informed by Hilltop Pharmacy that the pharmacy never received its expected delivery of Covid vaccines for this week. As a result, the planned vaccine clinic for Saturday Jan. 23 at the PFQ building was postponed. Staff were immediately notified via email and EZ Text. In addition, phone calls were placed to all staff who were scheduled to take part in the Jan. 23 clinic.

### **Week of January 25-29, 2021**

Thanks to outreach efforts to various pharmacies, Partners For Quality has scheduled additional Covid vaccine clinics for staff of all agencies and persons supported. As of January 29, the schedule is as follows:

*Please see schedule on next page.*



**Crisis Timeline 2021****Week of January 25-29, 2021**

As of January 29, the vaccine schedule is as follows:

- Feb. 1: Clinic at PFQ administrative building, with Walgreens.
- Feb. 3: Clinic at Citizen Care's Walden Senior Center, with Walgreens.  
This clinic is for persons supported only.
- Feb. 5: Clinic at PFQ administrative building, with Walgreens.
- Feb. 11: Clinic at Milestone's Enterprise building, with CVS.
- Feb. 12: Clinic at Milestone's Enterprise building, with CVS.
- Feb. 17: Clinic at Milestone's Conniff Building, with CVS.
- Feb. 20: Clinic at PFQ administrative building, with Hilltop Pharmacy
- Feb. 22: Clinic at PFQ administrative building, with Walgreens.
- Feb. 24: Clinic at Citizen Care's Walden Senior Center, with Walgreens.  
This clinic is for persons supported only.
- Feb. 26: Clinic at PFQ administrative building, with Walgreens.
- March 4: Clinic at Milestone's Enterprise building, with CVS.
- March 5: Clinic at Milestone's Enterprise building, with CVS.
- March 15: Clinic at PFQ administrative building, with Walgreens.
- March 17: Clinic at Citizen Care's Walden Senior Center, with Walgreens.  
This clinic is for persons supported only.
- March 19: Clinic at PFQ administrative building, with Walgreens.

**Friday, January 29, 2021**

Partners For Quality created a flier which was sent to the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs, Allegheny County Health Department and local area independent pharmacies. The flier offers PFQ's services to host community vaccine clinics free of charge at our administrative building at 250 Clever Rd. PFQ is offering registration and scheduling services in an effort to help get community members vaccinated.

**Thursday, February 4, 2021**

As a result of the flier referenced above, the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs contacted PFQ about hosting vaccine clinics. They have been scheduled for February 9 & 10 at the PFQ administrative building on Clever Rd.

## Crisis Timeline 2021

### **Tuesday, February 9, 2021**

Letters from CEO Maggie Rothenberger were sent to PA Gov. Tom Wolf and Kristin Ahrens, Deputy Secretary of the PA Office of Developmental Programs. The letter requested a raise in Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS) provider rates, to allow our agencies to continue the life-enhancing supports provided to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Like many providers, the PFQ family of agencies has endured a year of increased costs and lost revenues. Maggie's letter points out the fact that current HCBS fee schedule rates have remained largely *unchanged* since July 1, 2016. The lower, outdated rates put us at risk of (a) not being able to sustain programming to persons supported and (b) failing to compete in the marketplace to retain and are routinely unable to recruit good quality employees willing to work in direct support professional positions.

### **Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

Letters from CEO Maggie Rothenberger, similar to those detailed in the entry above, were sent to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Susan Rice, Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council. In these letters, Maggie asked that HCBS funding be included in the next Coronavirus relief package. These letters are part of an advocacy effort by Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources (PAR).

### **Friday, February 19, 2021**

Sent an email to U.S. Senator Bob Casey from CEO Maggie Rothenberger, thanking the Senator for his support of Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) funding.

### **Wednesday, February 24, 2021**

Updates from today's Task Force meeting:

- Extra COVID "hazard pay" and in-house COVID testing will wrap up by the end of March. Staff needing testing will be referred to local pharmacies.
- Intellectual & Developmental Disability day program re-openings:
  - Milestone Centers is planning staggered openings of its day programs during the first two weeks in March.
  - Citizen Care is planning staggered openings of its day programs starting in mid March.
  - In both cases, there will be limited number of persons supported.
  - Remote services will continue.
- Letters were sent to staff, families and stakeholders recently that Citizen Care will permanently close the Center for Creative Opportunities; with a more concentrated focus on person-centered supports.

## Crisis Timeline 2021

### Thursday, February 25, 2021

PFQ Communications, along with the PFQ Committee for Race, Diversity and Inclusion, arranged a “Covid Vaccine Town Hall” event on Zoom. Taking place at 7 p.m., the call was moderated by Terrilyn Cheatham of PFQ Human Resources and featured expert panelists Michelle Holbrook (Pharmacist from Excela Health) and Dr. Ken Thompson (Medical Director at Milestone Centers). The call focused on many questions and facts surrounding the COVID vaccines, including safety and efficacy. The event was communicated to all staff ahead of time, and they were invited to attend. We recorded the call with the intent of distributing the recording to all staff, so everyone would have an opportunity to watch and learn. A link to the video was emailed to staff on Feb. 26, along with posting the video on the My PFQ staff intranet page. A link to the video will be texted to staff next week.

### Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Providers across the state were notified by Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources (PAR) that members have reported that some direct support professionals are being denied entrance to hospitals to support individuals with ID/A during COVID-19. As a result, we produced letters for Citizen Care and Milestone Centers, signed by Maggie, verifying the bearer’s role as a direct support professional. It may be used if hospital access is needed. Letters were provided to respective management and supervisors at each agency, to be distributed to staff.

### Friday, March 19, 2021

PFQ Executive Director of Communications Greg Jena participated in a Zoom call with the Allegheny County Health Department. The call focused mainly on local skilled nursing facilities and the challenges they face in getting staff vaccinated. PFQ was invited to participate because of the efforts made on behalf of our staff. Greg described the educational efforts PFQ has made in giving staff facts about the vaccine, and the Town Hall call that took place in February. He also shared information on the percent of staff at each PFQ agency that has opted for the vaccine.

### Wednesday, March 24, 2021

The Coronavirus Task Force decided to move to one, weekly “pulse call” meeting every Wednesday. This was done thanks to supplies and situations being manageable. Should conditions warrant, meeting frequency can be increased at any time.

## Crisis Timeline 2021

### **Thursday, March 25, 2021**

PFQ Chief Human Resources Officer Cindy King issued a memo to staff communicating the changes in / end to certain pandemic benefits. (See February 24, 2021 entry). PFQ decided to extend testing for staff through the end of March 2021.

### **Wednesday, April 7, 2021**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updated guidelines on mask wearing and mask types. This information was shared with all members of the Task Force, along with being posted on the PFQ staff intranet site.

### **Friday, April 16; Sunday, April 18; Monday, April 19 & Wednesday, April 21, 2021**

PFQ again teamed with Rite Aid to provide COVID-19 vaccination clinics at the PFQ administrative building in Robinson Township. These clinics, offering the Pfizer vaccine, are open to all staff who have not yet been vaccinated and wish to be; along with the community at-large, via pre-registration.

### **Thursday, April 29, 2021**

PFQ Chief Human Resources Officer Cindy King issued a memo to all staff indicating that PFQ is extending agency-provided COVID testing through May 31, 2021.

### **Wednesday, May 12, 2021**

PFQ help another open COVID-19 vaccination clinic in cooperation with Rite Aid. The clinic took place at PFQ's administrative office in Robinson Township from 10 a.m. – Noon.

### **Friday, May 14, 2021**

An email was sent to all staff (at all agencies) and board members asking for advocacy. Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources (PAR) – one of the advocacy groups to which Partners For Quality belongs – has shared its budget request for \$540 million in COVID-19 relief with Governor Wolf and our PA legislators. As the General Assembly works on finalizing its budget, PAR is asking everyone to send a message asking them to include funding to keep Intellectual Disability/Autism services afloat and increase wages for Direct Support Professionals. The email contained a link where participants can easily compose and send the letter.

**Crisis Timeline 2021****Friday, June 25, 2021**

A communication (and detailed informational flier) was sent to all staff, with facts about the Delta Variant of the Coronavirus. Known to be much stronger, more lethal and more easily transmissible than the original strain, the Delta Variant is being seen in more new cases. This communication was sent along with a reminder that staff who have not yet been vaccinated should consider the vaccine to protect themselves and people they support from this dangerous strain.

PFQ Coronavirus Task Force meetings continue weekly, each Wednesday. The Task Force meets via Microsoft Teams. Additional meetings and discussions are held if and when necessary.

**Tuesday, August 3, 2021**

In light of the prominence of the Delta variant, along with COVID cases on the rise regionally, CEO Maggie Rothenberger delivered a detailed video message to all staff, reminding them of the importance of wearing masks. Maggie reiterated that masks help protect staff, persons supported and all with whom they come in contact. She also reminded viewers that our agencies have plenty of surgical masks and N-95 masks in stock should anyone need one or request one. Video was posted on staff intranet site, distributed via email and distributed via the Paychex messaging system.

Mask policy remains in effect that all staff must wear masks in common areas and in vehicles when transporting persons supported.

**Wednesday, August 25, 2021**

In today's Task Force meeting, Natalie Symons, RN, Director of Milestone Centers' Health Care Quality Unit West, provided a detailed explanation of how the COVID-19 virus works.

**Tuesday, August 31, 2021**

Scott Douglass, PFQ Executive Director of Quality and Compliance, issued an updated policy: Human Resources Protocol: Exposure to Positive COVID-19 Employee at Work

**Wednesday, September 1, 2021**

In today's Task Force meeting, Natalie Symons, RN, Director of Milestone Centers' Health Care Quality Unit West, provided a detailed explanation of how the COVID-19 vaccines work and what makes them effective.

## Crisis Timeline 2021

### **Tuesday, September 7, 2021**

CEO Maggie Rothenberger recorded a video message to staff, reminding and reinforcing the list of COVID-19 symptoms. Staff were asked to be vigilant for persons supported and themselves as the number of Coronavirus cases were slowly on the rise. Video was shared via email, texted via the Paychex messaging system and posted on the staff intranet site.

### **Monday, November 9, 2021**

Staff who have not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine were sent a text message reminder (via EZ Text system) about the opportunity to earn a \$100 incentive for getting vaccinated and providing a copy of their vaccine card to the Human Resources department.

### **Tuesday, November 30, 2021**

PFQ CEO Maggie Rothenberger recorded a video message that was sent to all staff (via text, email and post on My PFQ staff intranet page), informing them: You likely have heard that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released an emergency temporary standard requiring all companies and organizations with more than 100 employees to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations. While this standard is being debated at the federal court level, Partners For Quality and its subsidiaries have decided to move forward with this mandate in anticipation of the law being passed and implemented. We are acting on the mandate early, so we have more time to help employees obtain their vaccinations prior to our due date of January 30, 2022.

The following documents and forms were made available to all staff via U.S. mail, email and posting on the My PFQ staff intranet site:

- PFQ Mandatory Vaccination Policy
- PFQ COVID-19 Vaccination Religious & Medical Exemption Policy
- PFQ Compliance Statement on Mandatory Vaccination & Masking Policies
- PFQ Medical Exemption Form
- PFQ Religious Exemption Form
- PFQ General Mask Policy

**Crisis Timeline 2021-2022****Friday, December 17, 2021**

Partners For Quality prepared a Vaccination Requirement Q&A document and distributed to all staff. Additionally, CEO Maggie Rothenberger and Chief HR Officer Cindy King scheduled two "Vaccine Requirement Town Hall" meetings, via Zoom. These will give staff an opportunity to ask questions and get more information. All staff were notified of the Town Hall meetings and were provided Zoom links. Town Halls will take place on Dec. 28 and Dec. 30.

**Thursday, January 6, 2022**

In an effort to help staff meet the COVID vaccination deadline, PFQ set up two vaccination clinics on January 6. One at the PFQ building in Robinson Township; and one at Milestone's Enterprise building in Monroeville. Staff were notified via email and text.

**Friday, January 14, 2022**

A message was sent to all staff, clarifying PFQ's COVID vaccine requirement. This week, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the Biden admin's Covid requirements for workplaces, but allowed vaccine mandate for health care workers. Knowing that staff may have questions, the staff message explained that the PFQ vaccine requirement was in place for the safety of persons supported and staff – no matter what was decided in the courts. It was also communicated to staff that the January 30, 2022 vaccine deadline was still in effect.

**Tuesday, January 18, 2022**

All staff were sent an email and text with the link to order free at-home COVID test kits from the U.S. Postal Service. The link was also posted on the My PFQ staff intranet site.