

April 16, 2020  
To Our Families and Guardians  
Subject: CA COVID-19 update

Good afternoon,

Since Governor Whitmer's March 23<sup>rd</sup> lock down Community Alliance has been diligently at work ensuring all extended staffing schedules remain intact and effective. I have been deeply affected by the headlines in the news relating stories of licensed facilities with multiple clients and staff diagnosed with the virus. As of today, there have been 23 deaths in Washtenaw county. The Ypsilanti zip codes 48197 and 48198 are considered 'hot spots' in the county for COVID-19 exposures and hospitalizations with total cases representing 32% and 41% of the Washtenaw County statistics.

<https://www.washtenaw.org/3108/Cases> These numbers and the constant reminder of how high the stakes are makes my commitment to our Emergency Response Plan iron clad! I am 100% convinced that our approach to locking down our client's homes with dedicated staff working extended shifts is the BEST way to keep everyone safe and healthy.

These numbers and news headlines weigh heavy on our Direct Support Professionals, too. Our staff are showing up for their shifts despite the realities around them. Most do it out of a sense of duty and commitment to our clients. And many do it because they live on the margins of our economy and would lose so much if they didn't have a regular paycheck. These are the unsung heroes of this pandemic. These are the folks I fight the hardest for. Without them, we don't stand a chance.

We recognize the value our Direct Support Professionals bring to Community Alliance and ultimately to the lives of the people we serve. Community Alliance is working with federal and state stakeholders to utilize all of the financial assistance that is available for nonprofits during this COVID-19 emergency. As these funds become available we are committed to pushing as much as possible out to the staff on the front lines as quickly as possible.

We were among the first nonprofit organizations to apply for the Payroll Protection Program Loan through the Small Business Administration as part of the first stimulus package congress approved in late March. Our application was complete on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and this morning we received a deposit into our payroll through the Small Business Administration! The funds will be used to offset the almost \$50,000 per month **loss of revenue we've been experiencing** and the incredibly high **overtime expense we have been paying out** to ensure continuity of care to the safety and wellbeing of our clients. Most importantly, this forgivable loan from the federal government will allow us to provide hazard pay to all of the Direct Support Professionals working in the field.

I am happy to report that we have not had a single exposure to COVID-19 among our 68 staff members nor our 23 clients. We are almost 4 weeks into our Emergency Response Plan to COVID-19 and our staff are feeling the burden of being essential workers. It is our sincere hope that the hazard pay will help them feel appreciated and encourage them to continue to engage our agency as we make our way through this emergency.

Because I know with all my heart that we will make it through this epic time together and intact.

Love and peace,

Kathy Grant  
Executive Director