



Promoting wellness and recovery

Mike DeWine, Governor • Lori Criss, Director • 30 E. Broad St. • Columbus, OH 43215 • (614) 466-2596 • mha.ohio.gov

March 12, 2020

Hospital Visitors:

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) values our patients' visitors, and the role they play in recovery and wellness of their loved one. Please be advised that Governor Mike DeWine confirmed on March 9th, 2020, Ohio's first positive Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in Ohio. The Governor signed [Executive Order 2020-01D](#), declaring a state of emergency to protect the well-being of Ohioans. Over the past couple of days, the situation with Coronavirus (COVID-19) has continued to evolve and now includes cases of individuals who have not traveled to an impacted area being diagnosed with having the virus. For more information on the evolving situation with COVID-19 please visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov, or call: 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

In response to the Governor's most recent recommendations, OhioMHAS is limiting access to our facilities across Ohio the state's six regional psychiatric hospitals by prohibiting outside visitation. At this time telephonic visitation can occur as we finalize technology to assist with further visitation options. Outside contractors and vendors that are mission critical will be granted access to the hospital after they have been screened.

The health and safety of our patients and staff is our top priority. We are committed to efforts to prevent the spread of the virus while ensuring continuity of care for those who OhioMHAS serves.

Please know that these safety measures have been put in place as a means of protection and are not meant to isolate or limit communication with patients. Rest assured OhioMHAS staff will work diligently to incorporate the use of technology to maintain and facilitate communication between patients and their families and guardians.

In addition, we have increased the cleaning schedules at the hospitals, and staff are encouraging all people who enter the hospital to wash their hands frequently with soap and water, and to use the hand sanitizer provided in the reception areas. These safety measures will be reassessed daily.

Practice Preventative Measures

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Call before visiting your doctor.
- Clean and disinfect “high touch” surfaces often.

Information on the Coronavirus in Ohio is evolving daily. State and local governments are working to ensure Ohioans have access to up to date information. If you have questions or would like additional information and resources, we urge you to use the Ohio Department of Health’s call center to get answers to specific questions regarding COVID-19. Call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634), or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For information and resources for maintaining behavioral health during this uncertain time and to stay up to date on OhioMHAS actions related to the virus, please visit:

<https://mha.ohio.gov/Health-Professionals/About-Mental-Health-and-Addiction-Treatment/Emergency-Preparedness/Coronavirus#42351146-cdc-resources>, or visit the OhioMHAS home page at: mha.ohio.gov and click on *Managing Coronavirus- related stress* at the top of the page.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Criss". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lori" and last name "Criss" clearly distinguishable.

Lori Criss
Director