



May 15, 2020

Dear Community Participants and Families,

The past few months have been an incredible challenge for you all and we are proud of you for doing such a good job of taking care of yourselves, your family, and each other. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our lives in many ways. It presents to us challenges every day that require planning, sacrifices, and taking on new responsibilities to protect ourselves and everyone around us.

On May 13, 2020 Governor Walz informed the State of Minnesota that businesses may begin opening with certain protections in place. While the Stay at Home order will be lifted on Monday, there remains expectations of continued Social Distancing and staying at home whenever possible. In order for us to be able to come back to together as a community, we need to continue to be socially responsible and adhere to the guidelines and rules that are around us, all of which are intended to keep everyone safe. We must remain vigilant. This includes that we are not hanging out with large groups of friends as if everything is back to normal. We are aware that opinions differ on some of these issues and we can't make decisions for you. However, MICC will be taking the approach of playing it safe since we have a tight small community that shares space, lives near one another, and some of our participants and employees are at higher risk of illness.

The Leadership Team and Community Program staff have spent the past weeks preparing for this expected change and have adopted many guidelines from state and local health authorities. We have been ordering supplies, collecting masks, planning for office and space changes, training employees, developing monitoring protocols, altering shifts for employees, and adjusting many cleaning practices. If you are interested in reviewing more of the plans, the **COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for the Community Program** is attached and can be found on our main webpage in the COVID-19 Updates area. I highly encourage reviewing it, so you feel assured and so that you understand where your responsibilities are in making this work. We fully intend to update our Preparedness Plan over the next weeks and months as things change, and when we do, we will keep you updated.

We will begin our phase-in approach slowly, beginning the week of May 18, 2020. Our focus will be strictly on providing limited essential in-person check-ins and essential needs supports of participants all of which must be scheduled. At this point the **Community Center will not be open** for hangout space or social activities of any size. The primary method of service delivery will remain through remote services and most direct service employees will have less than two shortened shifts to prioritize meeting with participants one-on-one if there is a reason to be doing so. For the time being, Specialists will be prioritizing and contacting those they feel are in need of a **face-to-face** check-in. Our coaches will have some shifts as well, to coordinate with Specialists on helping to address urgent needs relating to essential health services and urgent grocery issues as they arise. The biggest change at this time, is that we will have presence again at the Community Center which means that urgent situations will be more immediately addressable. There will be staff present each day of the week during daytime and some evening hours, however the Community Center will not be open for drop-ins or activities.

Our hope is that we can take this phased-in approach at a pace that we can ensure that our employees and participants have time to learn our new expectations to stay safe. Our goal is to continue to open more services and activities over the next few weeks, however we need everyone's support to follow the Social Distancing expectations, and hygiene expectations so that we can continue to move forward and not have to step back. If all goes smoothly, we will be ready in June to begin prioritized Health and Safety Checks and some essential in-home supports. By mid-June we will hopefully begin some small group outdoor activities and start a gradual phase back of Social Programming and additional Support Services on through the summer. If you plan on returning to Richfield in the coming months, we ask that you communicate with your specialist, job developers and roommate's family to coordinate timing and expectations. Your continued support and patience are so appreciated. Please contact Sarah or I if you have specific questions after reading through the Preparedness Plan referenced above.

Sincerely,

Aaron Carper
Director of Community Programs

Sarah Arentson
Director of Career Programs

Amy Gudmestad
Executive Director