



March 23, 2020

Matthew Cartter, M.D., MPH
State Epidemiologist
Epidemiology and Emerging Infections Program
Connecticut Department of Public Health
410 Capitol Avenue, MS#11EPI
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

Dear Dr. Cartter:

Employees of community nonprofit health and human services agencies are on the front lines as Connecticut confronts the COVID-19 pandemic.

These employees deal daily with vulnerable people in need of behavioral health care and addiction treatment, work with people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, provide shelter to those in need, help children in crisis and assist people making the transition back to their communities after incarceration. They work in facilities, on crisis teams and live in residences with people they serve.

On behalf of front-line nonprofit staff, please **designate community nonprofit staff as essential to the healthcare system**, giving them the same access to priority testing and treatment as other healthcare workers. It is important that they and the people they serve -- many of whom are people with medical and behavioral conditions which make them especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of COVID-19 -- have the same knowledge as those who are already deemed priorities for testing.

Without this designation, nonprofits with employees who have been exposed to others, including clients, who have tested positive or are exhibiting symptoms must quarantine significant numbers of staff for a sustained period of time as they trace close contacts. This disruption is destabilizing an already fragile and understaffed human services system. With more rapid testing for these essential healthcare staff, those with negative tests could return to work sooner and community nonprofits could focus their energy on continuing to provide vital services and caring for the clients and staff who do become infected.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gian-Carl Casa
President and CEO

CT Community Nonprofit Alliance
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