



June 30, 2020

Dear Community Member,

In our last letter, we shared our commitment to providing you with updates on how our system is adapting in the pandemic, and taking the necessary steps to ensure that you have access to the services you need, while staying safe and healthy. You are always in the forefront of our minds, but in these past few weeks, amid community uprisings it becomes even clearer how important it is for us to stay connected.

We acknowledge the founding of our nation and its wealth was built on the oppression of Black and People of Color and the destruction of the Indigenous First Nations. Racial Injustice is institutionalized in the structures of our governments, businesses foundations, and community-based organizations across the country. There is acute pain and trauma being expressed by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. This pain is not new, but has been amplified amid the national outrage of the murder of George Floyd, under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer. These systems of violence and oppression must end.

We know health and safety for Black lives must include those living with HIV. And we know that health and safety for those living with HIV must include all Black lives. As HIV service organizations, we have tried to build ourselves on the values of equity and social justice. We also know that this doesn't mean that we've never missed the mark, or that there aren't deep areas for improvement. As individual organizations, and as a larger system, we have been looking internally at where we need to do this work.

Though people living with HIV whose viral load is suppressed are not at a higher risk for COVID acquisition, COVID-19 continues to be a threat in our communities, especially to older adults and people living with underlying conditions. Systemic racism, as it does in so many arenas, has meant that the impact on BIPOC communities has been disproportionate. There continues to be little evidence that there is any immunity to COVID-19, nor is there a vaccination. We cannot stress enough that it is important to maintain healthy habits of social distancing by deliberately increasing the physical space (six feet) between people, wearing a face mask when closer together, washing your hands often, and avoiding larger crowds and crowded spaces. We also understand that people are making decisions to show up in large groups to protest against police brutality and racial injustice. We support the decisions of individuals and know there are ways to do this and still take good care of your health and safety. Please reach out to us if you are in need of masks or hand sanitizer.

We continue to want to share the message that "We're here for you." Our programs continue to provide telehealth and limited in-person services and we continue to work with state and local officials to put plans in place to expand in-person services. Call us, keep an eye on our websites and Facebook pages for more updates.

A few important updates:

- In coordination with your medical providers, you may resume your regularly scheduled blood work, with many providers offering in-person services with appointments.
- In addition to the now available Ryan White emergency funds, the Federal CARES Act funding included additional funds available for emergency financial needs such as utility bills, cell phone assistance, food assistance, and health and hygiene supplies. Please contact your case manager or other service provider for assistance in accessing these funds.
- Behavioral health sessions and groups are widely available by phone or online video for existing and new clients. Please call your providers or case managers to learn about available sessions and groups

Find accurate information on COVID-19 & HIV [here](#) in both English and Spanish. We continue to recommend the following websites for up to date and accurate information: [Multnomah County](#), [Oregon Health Authority](#), or [211 for general questions about Coronavirus](#) and for resources to help meet your basic needs.

We are here to support you. We know what this community can do when there is a need, and we will continue to take lessons from the early days of the HIV epidemic to support each other through this time.

Call us, we can help,

[Cascade AIDS Project](#), [EOCIL](#), [EMO HIV Day Center](#), [HIV Alliance](#), [Multnomah County HIV Clinic](#), [Oregon Health Authority](#) (including [CAREAssist](#) and [OHOP](#)), [Our House of Portland](#), [Quest Center for Integrative Health](#), [Ryan White Part A & B](#), and [The Partnership Project](#)

Please note: You can also monitor information about each agency from our individual Facebook pages and websites.

- <https://www.facebook.com/CascadeAIDSProject/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/EOCIL.org/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/EMOHIVServices/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/hivalliance/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/MultCoHealth/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/OregonHealthAuthority/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/OurHousePDX/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Quest.Center/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/ThePartnershipProject/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/worldaidsdaynw/>

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