



March 18, 2020

Direct Support Professionals Defined As Essential Employees

Direct Support Professionals are essential and integral employees to OPWDD's provision of services, and that is especially true during this public health emergency. OPWDD has remained in close consultation with our partners at the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Education Department, as well as with those at the federal and local level, to ensure the health and safety of all staff.

In guidance issued by the NYS Education Department, found at: [Additional Guidance on Statewide School Closures Due to Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreak in New York State](#)  - March 17, 2020, DSP's are classified as essential health care workers:

“Essential health care workers may include licensed health professionals such as physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, registered nurses, LPNs and nurse assistants or laboratory personnel and direct support professionals. First responders may include paramedics, emergency medical technicians, police officers, and firefighters.”

As you know this is a rapidly evolving situation. Please check the New York State Department of Health (DOH) [Novel Coronavirus webpage](#) for frequent updates.