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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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CEO issues plea to employees to remain vigilant; describes impact to NMG of new CDC status for County

EAGLE LAKE, Maine (Dec. 3, 2020) – Northern Maine General CEO Michelle Raymond issued two important notices to her Administrative Team for their employees today - one a plea to strictly adhere to COVID-19 safety measures while out in the community, and the other, an announcement of changes impacting employee practices due to CDC's elevation of Aroostook County to "yellow" status.

Her plea reads, in large part:

"Aroostook County has doubled in our community spread rate for COVID-19. Two healthcare agencies have been hit and are working with CDC right now to manage their positivity rate ...

"I cannot stress enough the importance ... to WEAR A MASK, wash/sanitize your hands, and keep socially distanced. This is a difficult time to socially distance from friends and family, but our rural area hospitals, ambulance and EMT services can easily become overwhelmed.

"NMG supports medically needy people and families who depend on us and who we, in turn, depend on for our employment. We also cannot afford to lose 10 employees to quarantine or even worse to hospitalization and other tragic illness. Each of us matters to this agency, and I want all of us to stay healthy and, in turn, help keep our clients healthy.

"The Country's spread rate increases every day, the hospitalization and death rates set new records every day for the last month! This is no joke. NMG is a large extended family. We depend on each other. And I ask that we continue to stay careful; even though it's been a long haul, light is coming at the end of the tunnel. Vaccines are on the way to help reduce community spread, but we need to hold out a bit longer. Live smart, wear your mask, socially distance and

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we will get through this difficult time together. Thanks for everything you do.”

Her notification to staff regarding procedural changes, effective immediately, reads, in large part:

“Since Aroostook County is now in the yellow, listed as Moderate community spread, this means that we should be wearing eye protection at this time if we are staff working with a resident/client within droplet distance (6 feet or closer). Guidance does not require we stop activity or visitation. CDC guidance suggests in Moderate phase, the following applies:

1. Outdoor and indoor visitation can continue as is (with limitations)
2. No pet visitations
3. We should limit non-essential staff
4. Volunteers are not allowed in residential settings
5. Communal dining 6 feet or more distance (or approved protective barrier between)
6. Medical visits allowed in facility or outside facility with a provider escort
7. Group activities limited to less than 10, using hand hygiene, masks, and distancing
8. Face AND EYE protection required for staff with reasonable expectation of respiratory droplets exposure (feeding, ADL care, med pass, transportation), etc.

“All non-essential face-to-face services should be limited at this time ... We continue to complete employee and client/family pre-screening before entering the location ... Return, if possible, to virtual supports in lieu of direct in-person supports.

“Thank you, and if you or your staff need anything, including additional supplies or training, please do not hesitate to reach out. Staff should be notified of this change in the County rate and the increased level of precaution we are now under at this time.”

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Northern Maine General is a nonprofit social services organization serving Aroostook County, with business offices in Eagle Lake and Caribou. Founded in 1907, NMG provides long-term care, rehabilitation, home and community supports, behavioral health services, case management, and consultation services and resources. Contracted services include subsidized apartments.