

## Alongside Communicable Disease Community Risk Reduction Strategy Version 2.5

Updated January 1, 2022

### Preamble

Ministry inherently involves regular contact with people. Alongside participants who minister either domestically or internationally may be exposed to and/or contract a variety of communicable diseases prior to and/or during their stay at Alongside.

While participation in community activities is a crucial component of the healing process for Alongside participants, occasionally a participant or Alongside staff member may be infected or previously exposed and become ill with a communicable disease that has the potential to spread to the community, disrupting the effectiveness of the retreat process and possibly resulting in significant consequences to community health. In such situations, for the sake of public health and program effectiveness, the level of such a person's exposure to others at Alongside may need to be limited.

Alongside has therefore established the following Communicable Disease Risk Reduction Strategy:

1. At the time of the Initial Alongside Application Process, and again one week prior to arrival at Alongside:
  - a. Applicants will be asked to answer questions about any current symptoms or known infectious diseases they have that may be easily transmitted to others through normal interactions, (such as active tuberculosis, viral diseases, etc.), and their level of exposure to such diseases during ministry life in their location of service.
  - b. The responses of those who reply positively will be reviewed by the Alongside CEO and/or Clinical Director, who may review them with an Alongside medical consultant.
  - c. At the CEO's or Clinical Director's discretion, participants may be asked to undergo further medical evaluation prior to entering Alongside properties.
2. If a participant/staff member becomes ill while traveling to an Alongside event:
  - a. A review process will take place as outlined in 1.b. and 1.c above.
  - b. A pre-attendance period of self-isolation may be required, either at a site other than Alongside or at Alongside.
3. If a participant/staff member becomes ill during attendance at an Alongside event:
  - a. A review process will take place as outlined in 1.b. and 1.c above.
  - b. The participant/staff member may be asked to isolate from the rest of the community:
    - i. A participant may be asked to participate in the program virtually or to leave the program. If a participant is asked to leave the program, unused

program fees will be pro-rated and refunded to those financially responsible for the participant's charges.

- ii. A staff member will remain isolated until cleared by the CEO or Clinical Director to return to work.
4. During the COVID-19 pandemic which began in 2020, (as of January 1, 2022):
- a. **ISOLATION** from others for five days will be required, regardless of a person's COVID vaccination status, for program participants or staff who either:
    - i. test positive for COVID using a PCR or antigen test, OR
    - ii. have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, such as:
      - a) Fever or chills
      - b) Cough
      - c) Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
      - d) Fatigue
      - e) Muscle or body aches
      - f) Headache
      - g) New loss of taste or smell
      - h) Sore throat
      - i) Congestion or runny nose
      - j) Nausea or vomiting
      - k) Diarrhea
    - iii. Isolation may end for such individuals on Day 6 if they have no symptoms or all symptoms are resolving. If fever persists, they should continue isolating until the fever resolves.
    - iv. Persons ending isolation should continue to wear a mask when around others through Day 10.
  - b. **QUARANTINE** from others will be required for participants or staff who have been in **close contact**<sup>1</sup> with a COVID-19<sup>2</sup> patient **during the period** 2 days prior to the COVID patient's symptom onset or specimen collection until the end of that COVID patient's recommended period of isolation.
    - i. If the exposed person:

Has been boosted (had a primary vaccine series appropriate for his/her age group and at least one booster)

**OR**

Completed the primary series (for his/her age group) of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months

**OR**

Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months,

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<sup>1</sup> An individual has met the criteria for "close contact" if they were less than [6 feet away from infected person](#) (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinical diagnosis](#)) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*).

<sup>2</sup> This means a person who is either confirmed to have COVID-19 via PCR or antigen test or is suspected to have COVID-19 based on symptoms.

**He/she will be required to:**

- Wear a mask when around others for 10 days.
- Test on day 5, if possible.

ii. If the exposed person:

Completed the primary series for his/her age group of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted

**OR**

Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted

**OR**

Is not fully vaccinated<sup>3</sup>

**He/she will be required to:**

- Avoid contact with others for 5 days. After that, to continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
- Test on day 5 if possible.

c. Our desire is to maintain a safe and effective environment of community healing. Therefore we are engaging in things like disinfecting all public areas daily, installing highly effective air-purification systems in all buildings, encouraging individual risk mitigation, and monitoring the health of everyone on campus. All Alongside participants and staff are asked to adopt the following measures:

- i. Wash your hands frequently using the 20-second method and use a paper towel to dry
- ii. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- iii. Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- iv. Let us know when you are feeling the first signs of illness
- v. Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze with a tissue, dispose of the tissue, and then wash your hands

d. Regarding COVID vaccinations and masking:

- i. At Alongside, we acknowledge that measures to prevent COVID transmission, and adherence to certain of these measures, such as mask wearing and vaccination, have been controversial topics.
- ii. At times, the values of safety and program effectiveness can be in tension with each other and must be balanced. Thus,

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<sup>3</sup> People are considered fully vaccinated: 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>

1. We may require indoor masking for ALL program participants and staff during certain periods of high local virus transmission or when COVID is identified on our campus.
2. At other times we may leave masking up to individual preference, noting therapeutic value to the ability to see each other's faces.
3. At all times, we encourage mutual respect and absence of judgment toward each other's masking decisions.
4. Those we desire to serve come from areas of the world which may not have ready COVID vaccine availability. Alongside has chosen neither to require COVID vaccination as a condition of program participation, nor to inquire about the COVID vaccination status of its staff or program participants, unless such information is needed to determine the appropriate category for quarantine, as outlined above.