



WHAT IS HOPE HILL YOUTH SERVICES DOING CONCERNING COVID-19?

Even in these uncertain times, we are learning more about Novel COVID-19 (coronavirus) and its impact on the communities and population we serve. As always, our focus is on the well-being of the children, families, young adults we serve along with our dedicated staff. We will be doing everything we can to help ensure their safety while continuing to provide our vital faith-driven community-based programs and services.

Hope Hill is continuing to monitor the developments around the virus. Our response to the virus is guided by several of Hope Hill's values – We live out our faith by our actions, the needs of children in our care always come first, and we are committed to supporting our staff, as well as established health protocols and procedures.

While this is a new virus, Hope Hill has created detailed protocols that meet the criteria handed down from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS). In addition, we have a full-time Licensed Nurse Practitioner on staff who has been a wonderful resource.

As of today, there are no confirmed cases of the virus in our ministry.

In the midst of this, I think it is critical that our ministry remains rooted in our faith. We want people to live with hope during this crisis and remind them that it's God who holds our future. As a ministry, my leadership team at Hope Hill will continue to do four things: Pray, trust God, show compassion, and give thanks in all circumstances.

With nearly 180 children cared for in over 30 counties throughout central and eastern Kentucky, Hope Hill will continue doing what we do best – providing high quality services in a safe, loving, and therapeutic environment to Kentucky's most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and families.

EDUCATION

Hope Hill therapists and case managers meet with hundreds of young people and families several times a week face-to-face using Zoom Conferencing, Skype or some other digital platform. In response to the virus, we are continually receiving further guidance and recommendations from Kentucky leadership and health officials. They have allowed for more flexibility in meeting the needs of our families and kids through technology.

We will continue to ensure families and young people know the latest information from the CDC, CHFS and other governing agencies. Their recommendations have included:

- Wash hands frequently and for 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60-95% alcohol.

- Stay home when you are sick or are displaying symptoms of the virus. If you are over 65 years of age and/or have a pre-existing health conditions, please stay at home and take necessary precautions.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Cover coughs and sneezes. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects; especially those on frequently touched surfaces or common areas.

HOPE HILL'S COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

Hope Hill's mission is to provide high quality services in a safe, loving, and therapeutic environment to Kentucky's most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and families. We aim to accomplish our mission primarily through 3 key areas: Therapeutic Foster Care & Adoption (we also do Private Adoptions), Independent Living, and an In-Home Juvenile Diversion program.

In order to minimize person-to-person interaction and the spread of COVID-19, Hope Hill's therapists and case managers have been instructed to indefinitely change the means by which they conduct therapy, visitations and other familial contacts. This means that our staff are to conduct all interactions via Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, or similar digital platform; unless crisis intervention is required to keep the young person and foster family safe from harm. Due to the stress and anxiety that this unprecedented situation is causing, Hope Hill leadership is requiring that all staff engage in more frequent contacts with our children and their families.

Hope Hill staff have been encouraged but not mandated, for those that can do their jobs effectively remotely, to remain at home and avoid coming into the office. This is especially true if they have a compromised immune system or a pre-existing health condition that makes them predisposed or at an elevated threat of contracting the virus.

We have developed an employee manual specific to the COVID-19 virus with protocols and procedures for our staff to follow. (if you would like a copy of this manual, please email me at chris@hopehill.org). These include, but are not limited to, screening staff at each of our 4 office locations:

- Screening will be done by the program director or administrative assistant when possible.
- Sanitary stations have been designated at each of our 4 locations. Persons entering the office must first utilize the sanitary station.
 - We have ordered thermal thermometers to help in the screening process.
- All staff will enter through the same door and report to the sanitary station.
- All staff are required to maintain the recommended social distance of 6 feet of contact between them and other staff members.
- Staff are instructed to wipe down with disinfected wipes, any and all surfaces they have come into contact with and dispose of them in the proper receptacle.

To the hundreds of young people and families we serve our work is vital. Hope Hill's leadership team is constantly monitoring information around the virus so that we can act responsibly. This year Hope Hill has helped over 200 children, families and young adults in over 30 counties, and we know that the virus is impacting them differently in the various locations. Hope Hill seeks to be a light in the darkness. Our ministry wants to confront the crisis by turning people's fears into a renewed and strengthened faith in Jesus.

These are very difficult times for everyone, but to child welfare providers, this brings a certain level of complexity that can only be known by those that are in it every day. Please commit with me to daily prayer for the kids and young adults we serve, for the foster parents who welcomed in a complete stranger out of love and compassion, and for our dedicated staff that are working tirelessly to ensure that the needs of our clients are being met.

Website: www.hopehill.org

Instagram: [hopehillyouthservices](https://www.instagram.com/hopehillyouthservices)

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