

July 29, 2020

Dear Friends,

I wrote a letter on March 20 detailing our response at Branches to this “temporary” event called COVID-19. None of us imagines that here, at the end of July, we would still be facing much of the same confusion and uncertainty. While God has proven Himself faithful and taken care of us in so many ways, the need to stay vigilant and to protect our clients, counselors, and all of the Branches family is still as real as it was in March. Thank you for your prayers and patience as we have journeyed this uneasy path together.

Here is an update as to where we stand now. First, let me praise God by saying He has protected us. To date, while there have been some “near misses,” staff and counselors that may have been exposed or may have been symptomatic, we have had only one counselor test positive for COVID-19. She immediately quarantined herself, stopped coming into the office, (she was in one of our satellite offices) and stopped seeing clients. God has also been faithful financially and Branches has stayed in a good place in terms of paying our bills, paying our counselors and staff, and fulfilling the mission of “recovering hope and restoring lives” for those who might otherwise go unserved. In fact, in the last six weeks we have seen more new clients than any other time in our history. Praise God from Whom ALL blessings flow!

We have updated our guidelines and procedures to maintain as much safety as we possibly can. We have generally followed the policy that whatever the strictest community standards are for any of our offices, all of our offices would follow. So, at this point we are requiring all persons in our buildings to wear masks in public places. If someone does not have a mask, we will provide one. All surfaces are still being cleaned regularly. We have designated “safe distance” spaces throughout the buildings. And we have added questions to our paperwork about exposure or symptoms. Frankly, if there is a chance that someone is a carrier, we do our best to assure that they do not affect anyone else at Branches.

For our staff and counselors, the policy is, if they have been directly exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19, or if they are symptomatic, they immediately stop client contact, do not come to the office, and get tested. A negative test or 14 days quarantine are required for them to return. In short, we believe we have taken all steps to insure the health and safety of all connected to Branches.

In addition, we still continue to offer telehealth services for anyone who is unable or unwilling to come to a Branches office in person. Our counselors and wellness staff have been trained and have become very proficient at telehealth counseling and consultations.

While we have gone the extra mile to be wise and protect one another, we have not waived in our confidence that our REAL security is found in Christ. “And we KNOW that our God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly MORE than we can ask or imagine.” Ephesians 3:20 Thank your for your prayers for us and your trust in us. It is our joy and honor to serve you and HIM in bringing healing to the Kingdom.

Dr. C. Michael Courtney
Director, Branches Counseling and Wellness Centers