**COVID-19 Protocol effective June 1, 2020**



Beginning 6/1/2020, everyone at Horses of Hope/Caballos de Esperanza Inc. (HOH/CDE) (staff, contractors, employees, volunteers, visitors, and clients) must follow the protocols listed to reduce risks of potentially transmitting COVID-19 and to ensure we are all working together to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of our community members. These protocols are based on current recommendations from the CDC, Puerto Rico and national executive orders and guidelines, and the specialized type(s) of clients and activities at HOH/CDE.

ABOUT COVID-19:

* The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold. The outbreak of this virus was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization on January 30, 2020. On March 15, 2020 the governor of Puerto Rico declared a state of emergency for Puerto Rico and has issued executive orders to control the spread of the virus, including closing of non-essential businesses, stay-at-home orders, and curfews.
* The CDC states the virus is spread easily and primarily through close contact with other people (<6 feet) through respiratory droplets when the person who is infected coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of others and be inhaled into the lungs. It may also be possible to contract the virus by touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching parts of the face. (This is not believed to be the main method of spreading and scientists are still learning more about this.) At this time, the risk for the spread of COVID-19 from animals to people appears to be very low. There are no reports of horses having or transmitting this virus to humans.
* People who are infected may or may not exhibit symptoms of the virus. A person may be asymptomatic or have mild to severe symptoms. People with underlying medical conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes are considered to be at high-risk for developing serious complications from the virus.
* Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. These symptoms may include, but may not be limited to, fever and chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue and muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

ROLES OF INDIVIDUALS at HOH/CDE:

Roles of individuals at HOH/CDE are identified as: Staff, Volunteers (horse leaders, side walkers, exercisers, feeders, cleaning and special projects), Students/Clients, Caregiver/Family Member, and Guests (contractors, board members, delivery persons, maintenance people).

AGREEMENT and PLEDGE to UPHOLD

All staff, volunteers, clients and their families will receive and be asked to read and sign a copy of this protocol, including a pledge to follow these procedures. Anyone who does not sign the copy of this protocol or comply with the procedures listed here will be prohibited from visits to HOH/CDE and equine-assisted activities until such time as these protocols are no longer needed.

RISK ASSESSMENT of CLIENTS

1. Staff (executive director/instructor) will be conducting a “Risk Assessment” for each client. This assessment will determine whether there is any condition – e.g., the person’s listed disability, another underlying medical problem, or cognitive impairment – that either puts them at high risk medically, and/or causes them to require close/constant physical assistance or physical proximity to volunteers and staff, and/or diminishes their ability to follow HOH/CDE’s COVID-19 protocol. No client will be denied services solely on the basis of their listed disability. Each assessment will be reviewed with and sent to the client and/or client’s caregiver.
2. Clients found to be “high risk” will be placed on a waiting list during Phase I of re-opening. This wait list will be reviewed monthly for each client listed until those conditions causing the high risk have been removed or diminished to the point where the benefit of the equine-assisted activity outweighs the physical and medical risks to the client and volunteers and staff.
3. For “high risk” clients who cannot participate in Phase I classes - including therapeutic riding - possible suitable alternative equine-assisted activities will be offered. These include but are not limited to virtual lessons or “meeting” with a horse and instructor online, interactive print materials delivered to the client offsite, and equine activities presented on-site communicating with and about the horses at a distance of not fewer than 20 feet away from the client and with no direct physical interaction with the horse, equipment, or volunteer(s).

DAILY COVID-19 SCREENING (required):

Employee COVID Screening

1. All employees will check their temperature and answer the health questions listed below (#2) before arriving to work with volunteers, clients or guests.
   1. If an employee answers YES to any of the health questionnaire questions or has a temperature above 99.5oF, that employee should stay home; cancel any class or activity with clients (notify clients/caregivers and volunteers); follow CDC-recommended steps and seek a definitive diagnosis if possible; and, not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with their healthcare provider.
   2. Employees who have symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during their shift should immediately inform clients and volunteers, separate themselves from others and go home; complete a medical incident for HOH/CDE records; follow CDC-recommended steps and seek a definitive diagnosis if possible; and, not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with their healthcare provider. If this occurs, the HOH/CDE COVID-19 Emergency Plan\* will be implemented immediately.
   3. Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 or reason to believe they have been exposed to a COVID-19positive person should notify the board of directors and any scheduled clients, volunteers or guests, and follow CDC recommended precautions. This may include home isolation for 14 days. If this occurs, the HOH/CDE COVID-19 Emergency Plan\* will be implemented immediately.

Volunteers, Clients, Caregivers/Family Members COVID-19 Screening

1. All volunteers, clients, caregivers/family members, and guests will have their temperature checked before leaving their parked car and moving towards any of the areas where horses, equipment, and/or other people are.
2. All employees, volunteers, clients, caregivers/family members, and guests will be asked to answer the following questions:
   1. Since your last day of work or last visit here, have you had any of these symptoms
      1. Cough? Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
      2. Or, at least two of these symptoms –

Fever, Chills, Repeated shaking with chills, Muscle pain, Headache, Sore throat, New loss of taste or smell?

* 1. Since your last day of work or last visit here, have you had a sick family member at home with COVID-19 or reason to believe you have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person? If the answer is yes to this question, the person will be asked to leave immediately, not return to HOH/CDE for 14 days regardless of the occurrence of COVID-19 symptoms, and follow CDC recommended precautions. This may include home isolation for 14 days.

1. If the answer is YES to any of the questions above or if an individual’s temperature is above 99.5oF, the HOH/CDE COVID-19 Emergency Plan\* will be implemented immediately.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLAN\*

If criteria listed above (\*) occurs or if HOH/CDE is notified that a person who was in the facility within the past 7 days is now showing symptoms and/or has tested positive for COVID-19, the HOH/CDE Emergency Plan shall be executed in four steps immediately.

1. Potential Contact Communication: The executive director shall notify all others who may have come in contact with the person or person(s) who is/are ill or have tested positive for COVID-19 and who may have been in a common area with that person, while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Office of Civil Rights HIPAA (see <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/hipaa-covid19/index.html>). The executive director shall also notify others who may have come in contact with a person who has a family member who is positive for COVID-19 or reason to believe s/he has been exposed to another COVID-19 positive person. All who may have been exposed to a suspected COVID-19 infected person shall be instructed to stay home for 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms (per the Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure) pending a definitive diagnosis of the sick person to whom they may have been exposed. All potential contacts shall be notified of the results of the definitive diagnosis for the sick person, and follow guidelines accordingly.
2. Possible Discontinuation of In-person Services and Volunteer Participation: If the sick person has *not* been at HOH/CDE for the past seven days, no special disinfection protocols are required and those volunteers and/or clients who have not had potential contact with the sick person may continue attendance at HOH/CDE for scheduled activities. If the sick person has been at HOH/CDE within a 7-day period, HOH/CDE shall close, notify all clients and expected volunteers or other visitors, and cease client services for seven days to minimize risk of further exposure.
3. Deep Cleaning Protocol: Public health recommendations are to wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other persons (e.g., employees, volunteers) being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Be sure to keep as much open air circulating around possibly infected surfaces and items. If the sick person has been at HOH/CDE within the previous seven days, deep cleaning and disinfection processes for surfaces and equipment – using EPA approved, hospital-grade disinfectant or other appropriate disinfectant products – will be initiated. All those involved in deep cleaning and disinfection should take extra precautions and will be provided with extra PPE by HOH/CDE to prevent self-contamination.
4. Any positive COVID-19 case that has been onsite at HOH/CDE and reported to our organization will be reported and included in the Injury and Illness Registry (Form OSHA 300).

COVID-19 EDUCATION for VOLUNTEERS, STAFF:

1. All volunteers will be trained through print materials, online virtual meetings, and practice sessions with the instructor in the following and the protocols for activities with clients. Volunteers will also be trained in sessions of 2-4 people in the discarding of PPE and safe cleaning of PPE, and equipment and surfaces touched during equine activities.
2. Volunteers who have comorbid conditions and/or who are in high risk categories (e.g., pregnant, over age 65) will be trained on protocols but only scheduled for tasks which can be done independently, with no other person within 6 feet or touching shared surfaces or items.
3. Risk classification for activities at HOH/CDE according to level of exposure are as follows: sidewalkers (high risk); assisted mounting/dismounting (high risk); horse leaders (medium risk); riding instructor (medium risk); ring assistant (low risk); tack/equipment and surface cleaning (low risk); horse grooming (low risk); deep cleaning surfaces or items after known exposure to COVID-19 (medium risk with appropriate PPE); horse exercising and training (low risk). Phase I of re-opening will only include low- and medium-risk activities. Phase II (high risk activities) is pending per CDC and government recommendations and orders.
4. Self-distancing, also known as social-distancing, is one of the primary ways to avoid contracting a virus or contamination. It is imperative that all persons within the facility maintain proper self-distancing as recommended by the CDC – a minimum of six feet maintained between individuals. This procedure should be continued even when people are wearing PPE (e.g. mask and/or face shield).
5. All people involved with HOH/CDE will be strongly advised to avoid gathering in groups, entering crowded and/or enclosed areas, hugging, shaking hands, eating face-to-face and similar activities on-site or off-site that would put them and/or others in close proximity and increase the risk of contamination.
6. Volunteers are asked – when at all possible – to use bathrooms in their own homes prior to coming to HOH/CDE. On-site bathroom (at the farm only) will be made available to volunteers only as needed for emergencies. If a volunteer needs to use the bathroom, a clean pair of gloves will be provided for them to use in the bathroom. After single use, these gloves are to be immediately discarded in a designated open trash container outdoors.
7. All volunteers, as with clients, will be given a copy and asked to sign this HOH/CDE COVID-19 PROTOCOL and pledge to uphold the procedures and principles listed here.

COVID-19 PROTOCOL GUIDELINES – ON-SITE:

1. All on-site lessons and equine-assisted activities for clients will be done as private lessons (single clients only) during COVID-19 restrictions. Any client who provides a minimum of 24-hour advance notice to HOH/CDE and does not wish to participate will be offered either a refund or credit towards any pre-paid lessons.
2. On-site bathrooms will not be available for clients and/or their family members as the only ones available are inside Iglesia Ciudad de Salvación and HOH/CDE staff cannot be responsible for these areas. Therefore, clients and their family members are asked to complete any bathroom needs prior to attending the facility.
3. All equipment to be used by volunteers and/or clients will be cleaned (and disinfected when possible) prior to and after each use. This includes – but is not limited to – grooming tools, reins, halters, lead ropes, bridles, helmets, cinches, bareback pads and saddles. Each client will be provided with a designated helmet and set of reins (the two pieces of equipment that have the most personal contact) which are uniquely used by them for each 7-day period. These items will be deep cleaned and disinfected by staff at the end of each 7-day period.
4. All staff, volunteers, clients and visitors must wear masks and/or PPE face shields while at HOH/CDE. Exceptions to this are when someone is involved in an equine-assisted activity where all persons are maintaining a minimum distance of 10 feet apart from each other. In this case, masks or PPE face shields can be removed until such time as distances are less than 10 feet between person(s). If a person does not have a mask, one will be provided free of cost by HOH/CDE.
5. No more than two volunteers and one instructor will be involved in any client lesson or activity on-site with a client. All persons will be required to maintain a distance of 6 feet minimum between themselves, the client and the instructor. The only exception for this will be if a client should have an incident that requires personal contact in order to meet immediate safety and medical needs. Should this type of incident occur, additional PPE in the form of gloves and face shields will be provided and used if at all possible.
6. Visitors will not be encouraged and will be admitted by invitation and appointment only, interacting solely with the Executive Director of HOH/CDE. Members of the general public may not be admitted on-site and will be asked to leave should they arrive.
7. Upon arrival, clients and their families will be asked to park in a designated area 30 feet from the equine activity area and wait in their vehicle until a volunteer and/or instructor has greeted them and completed the health screening. Any personal items of the client (e.g., cell phones, earphones, hats, jewelry, gloves, food or drink) must be left in the vehicle before proceeding to the equine activity area.
8. Clients are encouraged to attend with only one family member accompanying them. Caregivers and/or family waiting for the client to complete their lesson may bring a chair and sit outside next to their vehicle during the lesson. Otherwise, family members must remain in their vehicles during the lesson.
9. All equine-activities will be conducted in an outdoor open-air designated area (e.g., the riding arena, grooming shelter). In the event of inclement weather (e.g., high wind, rain) before or during the activity, the lesson will be cancelled or stopped immediately to avoid the possibility of reduced social distancing between participants to avoid bad weather. If the lesson is less than half over, full credit for the lesson will be given to the client and the lesson rescheduled. If the lesson is more than 50% completed, the client will be charged as usual and makeup time may or may not be provided – at the discretion of the instructor – at a later date.
10. Signs will be posted in the grooming area, by the riding arena, and by the parking area stating with the following information and procedures:
    1. Thorough hand washing will be done by all participants both before and after each lesson (minimum once per hour). 70% alcohol and/or hand sanitizer, along with anti-bacterial soap, water and paper towels will be provided for this to all volunteers, clients, staff, and any other person attending.
    2. Masks must be worn for all activities with less than 10 feet between persons.
    3. Gloves are *not* to be worn during equine activities.
    4. Open trash containers are provided for disposal of PPE (e.g., gloves, paper towels) and/or trash. Participants and guests are asked to deposit trash without touching the container.
    5. A designated area/container is provided for placing any equipment used by the client and/or volunteers during an activity, when that activity or lesson is completed. This equipment will then be cleaned and disinfected as needed by staff and/or volunteers and remain unused and untouched for a minimum of 24 hours prior to reuse.
    6. On-site bathrooms at HOH/CDE are not available at this time.
11. Any person – client, volunteer, visitor, staff – who does not adhere to these protocols will be given a verbal warning first, and if noncompliance continues after such warning may be asked to leave and not re-admitted until such time as these protocols are no longer needed and in place. Noncompliance – repeated or severe – may also result in the person being barred permanently from HOH/CDE.
12. The Executive Director will stay current on all CDC and governmental updates and recommendations about the pandemic and will constantly evaluate the areas of  
    work with the purpose of monitoring the development of new areas of  
    risk and needs in relation to the spread of COVID-19.

All clients, volunteers and staff entering HOH/CDE facilities will be given a copy of this document and asked to sign it, acknowledging their understanding, agreement, and pledge to follow the procedures and uphold the principles of maximizing public safety and minimizing risk. Photos of signed copies will be kept on file with the Executive Director of HOH/CDE.

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have received, read, understand,

*Name of person signing - printed*

and pledge that I and my family members will follow, support and uphold the procedures and principles listed in this HOH/CDE COVID-19 Protocol.

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Client’s or Volunteer’s Name (if s/he is a minor or has a legal guardian)

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Signature (client, volunteer, legal guardian) Date

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Signature (client, volunteer, legal guardian) Date

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Name & Signature of Witness Date