

Interim Guidance for Nursing Facilities During COVID-19 (3/18/20)

The Department of Health has received questions from nursing care facilities, associations, and constituents regarding best practices in nursing homes related COVID-19 including visitation policies. The Department is supporting guidance on critical measures issued by CMS for all nursing facilities, advise that facilities do the following:

- Restrict all visitors, effective immediately, with exceptions for compassionate care, such as during end-of-life situations
- Restrict all volunteers, non-essential health care personnel and other personnel (i.e. barbers);
 - o This does not include the following:
 - Home-health and dialysis services;
 - The Department of Aging/Area Agency on Aging and the Department of Human Services where there is concern for serious bodily injury, sexual abuse, or serious physical injury; and
 - Hospice services offered by licensed providers within the nursing home facility.
- Restrict cross-over visitation from personal care home (PCH), Assisted Living, and/or
 Continuing Care Community residents to nursing homes. Ensure cross-over staff adhere to the
 facility's infection disease protocol.
- When there is evidence of community spread of COVID-19 within your county or adjacent counties, nursing care facilities should cancel all communal activities.
- When there is no community spread of COVID-19 within their county or adjacent counties, facilities should, at a minimum, implement social distancing in dining practices and group activities. The following recommended approaches should be considered:

o Testing

- Implement active screening of residents and health care personnel for fever and respiratory symptoms (Recommended Screening Questions below);
- Staff should be screened at the beginning and end of every shift; and
- Complete a Facility Entry Screening Form for each screening (Template accompanies this guidance)
- If employees are ill or become ill during their shift, CMS recommends that facilities have employees put on a facemask and end their work shift, leave the building, and self-isolate at home.

o Admissions/Discharges

- Nursing care facilities must continue to accept new admissions and receive readmissions for current residents who have been discharged from the hospital who are stable to alleviate the increasing burden in the acute care settings. This may include stable patients who have had the COVID-19 virus.
 - Facilities should continuously consult the 2020 Health Alerts, Advisories and Updates for the most current information related to Test of Cure under the title "Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19