



MSDH COVID-19 Resources for Nursing Homes and Long-term Care Facilities

Key Points

- Older adults living in congregate settings are at high risk of being affected by respiratory and other pathogens, such as SARS-CoV-2.
- A strong infection prevention and control (IPC) program is critical to protect both residents and healthcare personnel (HCP).
- Even as nursing homes resume normal practices, they must sustain core IPC practices and **remain vigilant for SARS-CoV-2 infection among residents and HCP in order to prevent spread and protect residents and HCP** from severe infections, hospitalizations, and death.
- MSDH recommends long-term care facilities follow CDC's Infection Prevention and Control guidance documents for preparing and responding to SARS-COV-2 in long-term care settings.
- This document replaces the previous MSDH guidance, *COVID-19 Prevention and Response Guidelines for Long-Term Care Facilities* and provides hyperlinks to resources for basic infection prevention and control measures, outbreak response measures, and required reporting.

Infection Prevention and Control

Refer to CDC's Infection Prevention and Control guidance documents for Nursing Homes and HCP (see links below) to prevent SARS-COV-2 entry and spread in nursing homes and other long-term care settings including recommendations for vaccination, source control, visitation, personal protective equipment (PPE), SARS-COV-2 testing, and the evaluation/management of HCP and residents who are infected with or have been exposed to someone infected with SARS-COV-2:

- CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>
- CDC Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

Additional resources for basic infection prevention and control in long-term care facilities:

- COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Enrollment, Vaccine Request, and Resources: https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,71,975.html
- CMS visitation memos for nursing homes ([QSO-20-39-NH Revised](#)) and ICF-IID and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities ([QSO-21-14-ICF/IID & PRTF Revised 06.03.2021](#))
- CDC SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Testing in Long Term Care Facilities guidance for interpreting point of care (POC) antigen tests performed within the facility: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/nursing-homes-antigen-testing.html>
- MSDH COVID-19 Therapeutics Information: https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,420,694.html

Outbreak Response

MSDH defines an outbreak in a long-term care facility as a SARS-COV-2 infection confirmed in a single resident or HCP/employee. An outbreak should be suspected when clusters of respiratory disease (≥ 3 residents and/or staff) are identified. Notify the MSDH Office of Epidemiology of any confirmed or suspected outbreak.

Refer to the resources listed below for infection prevention and control guidance when responding to a SARS-COV-2 outbreak in nursing homes and other long-term care settings:

- The section entitled “Response to a Newly Identified SARS-CoV-2-infected HCP or Resident” of the [CDC Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes](#) document
- [CDC Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2](#) for evaluation and management of HCP with higher-risk exposures or HCP infected with SARS-COV-2.
- CMS visitation guidance for indoor visitation during an outbreak
 - Nursing Home Visitation - COVID-19: [QSO-20-39-NH Revised](#)
 - ICF-IID and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities: [QSO-21-14-ICF/IID & PRTF Revised 06.03.2021](#)
- Source control and physical distancing guidance: [CDC Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Reporting

Reporting Rapid/Point of Care (POC) Test Results

- All positive COVID-19 point of care (POC) test results performed by the facility must be reported to MSDH within 24 hours of the test result.
 - [COVID-19 Pandemic Response, Laboratory Data Reporting: CARES Act Section 18115](#)
 - [How to Report COVID-19 Laboratory Data | CDC](#)
- As of April 4, 2022, negative COVID-19 test results from POC tests (rapid antigen, rapid PCR) performed at nursing homes and other long-term care settings (and other healthcare settings) under a CLIA waiver are no longer required to be reported to MSDH. Negative COVID-19 PCR test results from samples that are collected by the long-term care facility and submitted to a reference lab or hospital-based lab are still required to be reported by the performing lab to MSDH through normal mechanisms. For more information regarding the updated SARS-COV-2 reporting requirements, see MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Alert: https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/resources/18648.pdf
- Nursing homes can fulfill the requirement to report positive test results that are performed at their facility (rapid antigen, rapid PCR) by entering individual test results into the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). Information about enrollment, security, and tutorials for the NHSN LTCF COVID-19 Module can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/covid19/index.html>
- Information about COVID-19 reporting to MSDH, including other methods for reporting positive point of care test results (e.g., SimpleReport) can be found on MSDH’s website: https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,420,694.html#reportingCOVID-19

Outbreak Reporting of New Cases and Deaths

- Notify the MSDH COVID-19 Outbreak Team in your area or the MSDH Office of Epidemiology (601-576-7725) of any identified COVID-19 infection or COVID-19 related death in a resident or employee within the facility.

Additional CMS Reporting Requirements

- Facilities should refer to Licensure and Certification regarding all CMS requirements including aggregate COVID-19 data reported weekly. COVID-19 data and updates from CMS can be found here: <https://www.cms.gov/nursing-homes/providers-partners/covid-19>