



## Quick Points on COVID-19

Our priority right now is to prevent COVID-19 from getting into long term care facilities and if it does get in, to prevent it from spreading. To do that, we recommend providers:

- 1) We believe skilled nursing facilities **and** assisted living communities must take dramatic action to limit non-essential individuals from entering our buildings and to ensure that employees who are sick stay home.
  - a. We strongly recommend five actions to help prevent the entry of COVID-19 into your facilities whether or not it has been found in the surrounding community. CMS has issued nearly identical guidance.
    - i. Limit entry to only individuals who need entry.
    - ii. Actively screen individuals entering the building and restrict entry to those with respiratory symptoms or with possible COVID-19 exposure out of an abundance of caution.
    - iii. Require all individuals entering the building to wash their hands at entry.
    - iv. Restrict group activities, such as outings to large, public places.
    - v. Set up processes to allow remote communication for residents and families.
- 2) Beyond our visitor recommendations, we were already encouraging long term care providers to:
  - Prepare your facility.
    - Review, update, and implement your infection prevention and control plans and your emergency communication plan. Follow CDC and local health department updates.
  - Prepare your staff. Reinforce that anyone who is sick should stay home.
    - Follow the same basic procedures used during flu season and current requirements for providers: handwashing, using alcohol-based hand sanitizers, covering coughs

### **Common media questions at this point**

- *Are you having trouble getting supplies like masks and gowns?*
  - We have heard from many providers about supply shortages of hand sanitizer, masks and gowns. In some cases, providers have told us they are not able to order any masks or gowns from their suppliers. Unfortunately, this could begin to impact providers' ability to handle a potential COVID-19 outbreak, as well as a regular flu outbreak since we are still in the midst of influenza season.
  - Our national association met with CDC, CMS and the White House last week, and we know they are working on these issues.

- At this point, we encourage health care providers in local areas to communicate and collaborate, so that supplies can be shared if possible, and contact their local health department if they are unable to acquire supplies.
- *What is happening with testing for COVID-19 in long term care facilities?*
  - We have been told by our providers that testing supplies have become more available this week, but we know many are still asking for additional supplies. Again, at the national level, we have met with CDC, CMS and the White House, and they are hard at work on this issue.
  - [If you have met with any state or local officials, mention that here.]
- *Should families who are worried move their loved ones out of skilled nursing centers or assisted living communities?*
  - No. Moving the elderly or frail is from a center is risky and often has long-lasting impacts. Research around natural disasters and other emergency events has proven this over time. CDC does not currently recommend transferring residents either home or to the hospital.
- *How can providers continue to provide good care if more and more employees have to stay home because they are sick?*
  - We are encouraging both federal and state governments to waive current licensing requirements that would hinder health care professionals from working across state lines, so we can potentially address any shortages due to employees needing to stay home. [Outline any efforts your state affiliate has taken to advocate for this.]
  - We are also advocating to the Administration for priority testing for our employees and residents, so we can quickly identify whether staff need to remain at home or if they can come back to work, and so residents can come out of contact isolation.
  - This issue of workforce shortage will not be fixed overnight. We need Congress to support innovative programs that will help recruit, retain, and attract people to work in long term care to ensure our nation can support the needs of our residents and patients.
- *How likely do you think this virus will be a problem at more nursing homes and care centers across the nation? It's already been a deadly issue in Seattle. Is the spread inevitable?*
  - We're still learning about this new virus. Just like the flu, we know that the frail and elderly are especially susceptible to this virus. Long term care providers are obviously concerned about this issue and taking it seriously.
  - With the increasing of testing expected this week, I would not be surprised if we see more cases. This is why we need help with supplies, priority testing, and staffing flexibility—to help prevent and contain the spread of this virus.

### Learn more

- *Where can long term care providers get more information?*

- CDC website has information specific to health care providers:  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
- The AHCA/NCAL website has the latest information for long term care providers:  
[www.ahca.org/coronavirus](http://www.ahca.org/coronavirus)
- [Refer to the state affiliate website if you have one.]