

Long-Term Care Facilities COVID-19 Advisory Group – Meeting Minutes

MAY 12, 2021
3:00PM-4:00PM

Review and approval of meeting minutes:

- Reviewed meeting minutes from last meeting – Approved and Seconded.

Housekeeping item:

Requesting items for the next meetings' agendas by COB Monday or recognize that those items may need to be bumped to the next week.

At times drop from the CDC that are urgent and that's okay – we can discuss but if there are requests for agenda items that require some research we need a little more lead time.

Vaccination Updates:

DOH collecting vaccination data – REDCap survey. Facilities enter data and DOH collects it. Partnering with King Co. who already has started to use REDCap. No timeline yet on implementation but perhaps we can begin wider implementation in the next few weeks. It is voluntary reporting on a monthly basis to track vaccination rates. It's also acknowledged that information is publicly disclosable.

AFH vaccination data:

There is no specific tracking data for AFH vaccination rates. DOH knows which homes were visited across the state/who they have connected with, but no detail on how many people were vaccinated at each home. The EPI team at DOH is working on data with goal of using REDCap survey. We do know which homes have had no contact. DOH has offered vaccination to every home/organization in WA (or a partner of DOH has contacted them). DOH is also keeping up with requests for vaccination.

Comment: Should acknowledge that we've added 30 AFHs across the state in the last year. New providers and change of ownership (CHOWs) are happening regularly so what is the maintenance plan for new facilities?

ACTION ITEM: RCS will talk with ALTA licensing unit to see about getting this added as part of the application process for new homes or CHOWs. John would like to be part of this process. (Status update to this action item: ALTA licensing indicates they would be happy to send out a flyer or one page document about vaccination resources. Kathy Bay and her team are working up a draft document for us to review that could be handed out to new providers.)

Kathy Bay shared the vaccination email that was sent to vaccination providers about single dose options and vaccination waste. It will be attached with these minutes so that the committee has a copy.

CMS Guidance:

CMS is seeking comments. Guidance document will also be included with the minutes. For Nursing Homes, citable regulations added regarding infection control, and vaccination. Offering vaccines to residents and staff, having an informed consent process and good documentation of everyone who has and has not had a vaccination. Reporting requirements to NHSN system. Adverse event reporting. Enforcement of reporting to begin mid-June. This is open for public comment, including for other settings.

Reporting to NHSN for other facility types would be new. May help in terms of data on vaccinations. If they choose to report into the RCS system, it can be fed into NHSN.

QSO memo says that facilities must offer vaccine when the supply is available, meaning you could use the LTC pharmacy as well. The definition of staff is anyone in the building at least once per day.

RCS is meeting to update all the questions in their survey so they match the NHSN for consistency when they upload.

Question: Has CMS updated the critical element pathways?

ACTION ITEM: Amy will check with RCS training staff on this. (Status update: RCS checked the CMS site. No changes have been made to date. We will keep checking back for updates.)

RCS is working on a Dear Provider/Administrator letter to go out related to this by the end of this week.

Vaccination refusal portion of guidance – discussion:

Question: Any conflict in the Safe Start plan with the right of refusal/decline of vaccination?

No, residents have the right to refuse. Facilities are trying to handle this appropriately. Facilities cannot take adverse actions against residents who refuse vaccination – this includes visitation. The state cannot restrict resident rights over what the federal government allows.

ACTION ITEM: Amy will check in with Amber Leaders on this. (Status update: Still in discussion. No changes at this time)

The comment period is about feasibility of applying rule to additional congregate settings.

They ask for data where it's available regarding employee turnover, sharing employees between facilities, etc.

Does WA have any of this data? DSHS is meeting with DOH to discuss this guidance and the workforce issue.

Other vaccination updates:

Vaccination response teams and pharmacies are out vaccinating. The nurse delegator work, planning and coordination is happening for ongoing vaccination. We have learned a lot that will also help with the flu vaccination process.

Also changes to timeframes between different vaccinations – new guidance is being reviewed.

Rapid Response Team update:

Rapid response teams began in mid-November 2020. They cover all settings. There are 6 teams total covering the I-5 corridor, Yakima, and Spokane areas. They can move depending on the need. They have expanded to anyone who has a staffing crisis. RCS has received very good feedback on these teams. The requests have increased lately for general staffing shortages.

We are hoping these teams will continue after June. DSHS is exploring that – looks like we will be able to do that in new budget.

We are hearing of some dire situations with staffing shortages.

Most requests are coming from 1) Nursing homes; 2) AFH; 3) Supported Living

The length of stay for these teams is usually 4-5 days but it's a case by case basis.

RCS has not had to turn down any requests yet but we are cutting down the number of days the teams can help a particular facility to 3-4 days to spread the resource.

The NHSN report survey does ask if facilities need outreach and then they are connected with rapid response teams.

Comment from committee member: A request was made recently and the response was that the rapid response teams are maxed out. No staff available to assist until next week at the earliest. This was a supported living request.

Agenda for next meeting:

Any updates/discussion regarding “reopening WA”, safe start plans/visitation, CDC guidance
Vaccination update (data, areas of concern, updates on access and tracking for ongoing vaccination, etc.)

Follow up on new licensees, CHOWs and how they get vaccination info.

COVID cases in LTC facilities (new outbreaks, breakthrough, variants, etc.)

Strike teams and ongoing funding