



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

August 6, 2020

AL TSA: ALF #2020-036
POINT PREVALENCE COVID-19 TESTING

Dear Assisted Living Facility Administrator:

This notice is to communicate the plan to move forward and support the completion of a point prevalence survey to identify any persons with asymptomatic COVID-19 infections working or living in assisted living facilities. The approach will be very similar to that used in the first phase of state supported testing for nursing facilities and ALFs with memory care units, with the benefit of being able to add lessons learned to this next round of testing. Like long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities are at risk for large scale outbreaks of COVID-19. Gaining an understanding of baseline rates of asymptomatic infection will help inform prevention and control efforts to limit transmission. The information will also be helpful in directing recommendations for ongoing surveillance testing of staff and help facilities develop the ability to perform large scale testing in the event an outbreak among staff or residents were to occur in the future.

We want to stress that, unlike the prior round of testing, this is not an order for testing, but rather an outline of recommendations for conducting the needed testing. We do urge every provider to follow these recommendations and to reach out to DOH-CBTS@doh.wa.gov if you have questions or need technical assistance. We are asking every facility encompassed by these recommendations to make their best efforts to complete testing by September 11, 2020. Any facility that has performed testing of all staff and residents for COVID-19 on or after July 1 is exempt from this request. Similarly, if an entire facility was tested along with their memory care unit in the first round of 'ordered' testing, repeat testing is not necessary. If a memory care unit was tested but other residents and staff in the facility were not during the first round, previously untested staff and residents should be tested at this time. As this work is completed, the Department of Health (DOH) will monitor the results to see the number of tests processed for staff and residents at each facility. If compliance with these recommendations should lag, we will return to the use of an order to direct the actions outlined below.

Therefore, DOH and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) recommends the following:

By Sept. 11, 2020, facilities should:

- Offer COVID-19 tests to all residents and administer tests to all consenting residents;
- Offer COVID-19 tests to all staff, inform them there will be no cost to them or their insurance, encourage compliance, and administer tests to all willing staff;
- Obtain a provider order to test all staff and residents. Facilities may approach their local health officer to see if they are willing to serve this role;
- Expect to provide all results, both positive and negative, to residents and staff unless the facility makes arrangements with a licensed prescribing professional willing to order and result the tests;
- Comply with all applicable state and federal laws when offering tests to, requiring tests of, administering tests to residents and staff including, but not limited to, any laws governing residents' health care decision-making such as Chapter 70.129 RCW: Long-term care resident rights, and WAC 388-78A-2660: Resident rights;
- Ensure timely proper specimen submission to an authorized laboratory, along with all information the lab requires to perform the tests, report test results, and obtain payment for residents covered by Medicare or Medicaid;

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- Immediately report positive test results for residents and staff to DSHS using:
 - The 24/7 Hotline: 1-800-562-6078 or,
 - Online reporting: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/residential-care-services/residential-care-services-online-incident-reporting> or,
 - Email: CRU@dshs.wa.gov or Fax: 360-725-2644);
- Consider a “staff member” any employee, contractor, volunteer, or person who provides health care, personal care, social, administrative, clerical, dietary, environmental, or any other kind of services in the facility;
- Contracted staff not scheduled to work on the testing day do not need to be called in or tested because this is a point in time survey.

The Community Based Testing Site (CBTS) customer service team will call each facility directly to start this process. They will confirm with you the current number of staff and residents at the facility. This will help determine how many articles of personal protective equipment (PPE) and specimen collection kits each facility needs. They will round up to account for gaps.

The CBTS team will send you an email with your assigned laboratory and instructions for sending specimens, following your call. This includes how to register online and complete the requisition forms, and how to properly prepare and package specimens with the material in your kits. Specimens not properly labeled, sealed, and packaged cannot be processed.

Your PPE and test kits will arrive in separate shipments; PPE from DSHS, and testing supplies from DOH. The supplies and specimen shipping costs, in the form of a pre-printed and prepaid shipping label, will be covered by DOH.

Insurance information should be collected and submitted for resident tests covered by Medicare or Medicaid. These payers will reimburse for specimen collection and for lab processing. Insurance information is not needed for staff or residents covered by any other insurance. The State of Washington will cover the laboratory fees for all staff and for residents who are uninsured or not covered by Medicaid or Medicare.

If a facility does not receive enough test kits or PPE to provide tests to all residents and staff, it must use every test it can and promptly email DOH-CBTS@doh.wa.gov about ordering more supplies.

Stakeholders were recently notified via GovDelivery of an upcoming webinar scheduled for August 11th on point prevalence COVID-19 testing for assisted living facilities. [Registration for this webinar](#) is required. In follow up, we will send another GovDelivery message with a link to Frequently Asked Questions from the webinar.

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: “Transforming Lives”