



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

March 30, 2023

ALTSA: AFH #2023-013
ALTSA: ALF #2023-014
ALTSA: CCRSS #2023-009
ALTSA: ESF #2023-012
ALTSA: ICF/IID #2023-007
ALTSA: NH #2023-014

SECRETARY OF HEALTH FACE COVERING ORDER ENDS APRIL 3, 2023

Dear Provider/Administrator/Superintendent:

On June 24, 2020, the Secretary of Health issued order [20-03](#), requiring individuals in the state of Washington to wear face coverings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the wearing of face coverings in long-term care facilities. The Secretary of Health [has announced](#) this order will be ending on April 3, 2023. While this order is ending, individuals in long-term care facilities, including residents, staff, and visitors, must continue to follow Department of Health (DOH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance.

DOH will be updating their *Interim Recommendations for SARS-Co-V-2 Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings* guidance on April 3. Their current guidance is found at the link [here](#), and the updated guidance will be found at this same link. Once the updated DOH guidance is published, long-term care settings are expected to follow the guidance. Facilities are asked to revise their policies to reflect the updated guidance by May 1, 2023.

DOH will be hosting webinars to discuss the new guidance. Registration for both webinars is available at the link [here](#). The dates of the webinars are:

- Thursday, April 6 10:00-12:00
- Thursday, April 20 10:00-11:30

CDC guidance is found [here](#). Both the DOH and the CDC guidance are also linked at the top of each provider page.

Facilities may create their own policies that require staff and ask residents and visitors to wear a face covering, as long as they are at least as stringent as DOH and CDC guidance.

Please also note that the Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) requirements are not changed by the ending of the Secretary of Health's order, nor will they change when the federal public health emergency ends on May 11, 2023. Staff will still be required to wear N95 respirators around individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, and an RPP is required anytime a respirator is used in a long-term care facility. An RPP must include medical clearance, fit testing, training, written policies, and documentation. For questions or help with an RPP, please contact the DOH Occupational Health Team at HAI-FitTest@doh.wa.gov or see the website [here](#).

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Katherine Ander, Infection Control Prevention and Projects Specialist, at (360) 742-6037 or katherine.ander@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"