



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

May 22, 2020

**AL TSA: NH #2020-034**

**UPDATE ON STATE PORTAL TO REPORT REQUIRED COVID-19 DATA TO CDC**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

On May 8, 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published an interim final rule that established a requirement for facilities to report confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In a memo dated May 6, 2020 ([QSO-20-29-NH](#)), CMS released information about the new rule and how to report the COVID-19 data.

In Administrator letter # [020-032](#), RCS reported that the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) were working to build an electronic system that facilities could utilize to report the data. Although facilities can choose to report the data directly to the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN, a subset of CDC), reporting through the state portal reduces the number of places facilities must report to. For those reporting data through the state portal, DOH will upload the data to NHSN.

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the state COVID-19 reporting portal and to provide instructions to use the portal.

The state system is available [here](#). DSHS maintains the reporting website, and DOH will use the data from the website to upload the data to NHSN. The state portal will accept COVID-19 data from facilities beginning May 26, 2020.

**Getting Set Up to Submit Data through the State Portal**

- 1) For DOH to upload data to NHSN successfully, the facility must be registered to use the NHSN website. First time users of NHSN can find enrollment instructions here: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/covid19/index.html>
- 2) When facilities choose to have a second party (such as the state) report data to NHSN, the NHSN database requires facilities to formally confer the right to report to a second party. To confer rights for the state to report to NHSN:
  - a) Log in to the NHSN website. Follow the instructions in the DOH attachment (inserted at the bottom of the letter) or at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/pdfs/covid19/ltcf/join-grp-508.pdf>
  - b) To join the group and confer the right for the group to upload data, facilities must have a Group ID and group-joining password. The Group ID and the password are in the DOH attachment.

**Instructions for Reporting Data to the State Portal**

- 1) Frequency of reporting. CMS required facilities to begin reporting by May 17, 2020. Under the new rule, reporting is required at least every seven days. CMS is not prescribing which

day of the week the data must be submitted, although reporting should remain consistent with data being submitted on the same day(s) each week. The collection period should also remain consistent (e.g., Monday through Sunday). Each Monday, CMS will review the data submitted to assess if each facility submitted data at least once in the previous seven days.

- a) DOH will upload data to NHSN three times per week:
    - i) On Mondays, data upload will occur for data collected on the preceding Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
    - ii) On Wednesdays, data upload will occur for data collected on the preceding Monday and Tuesday.
    - iii) On Fridays, data upload will occur for data collected on the preceding Wednesday and Thursday.
  - b) Please allow until the end of the business day for data to be uploaded.
- 2) Data. QSO-20-29-NH details the data that must be reported. Additional information about the reporting requirement is here: [CMS COVID-19 NHSN Requirements for Nursing Homes](#)

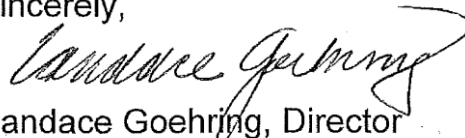
### **Verifying Data and Troubleshooting Problems**

- 1) Verifying data. The best way for facilities to confirm their data were uploaded to NHSN is to go into NHSN and review the data. Facilities may choose to download a report of their data for their records. It is best practice to review data entered into NHSN whether uploaded by DOH or directly entered by facilities to verify accuracy of data entry.
- 2) Correcting data. If data are missing or inaccurate, facilities can correct the entries directly in NHSN. Keep in mind that data uploaded to NHSN may be a few days behind entry into the DSHS portal. If your data has not been uploaded or appears to be incomplete or inaccurate, please contact [HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov).
  - a) NHSN data are owned by the facility, not DOH. DOH will not be able to change, edit, or overwrite any data entered in NHSN. Facilities are able to change, edit, and overwrite data uploaded by DOH.
- 3) Finding help. If you encounter problems at the state portal website, please email [RCSPolicy@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:RCSPolicy@dshs.wa.gov). If you have other questions about the data entry process, please email [RCSPolicy@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:RCSPolicy@dshs.wa.gov) or [HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov).

**Important Reminder:** Facilities have the responsibility to ensure their data is uploaded on at least a weekly basis. If you choose not to use the state portal to submit your data, you continue to be responsible to ensure your facility data is entered into the NHSN website. You may do so directly at the NHSN website or seek a different second party to submit the data on your facility's behalf.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Lisa Herke, Nursing Home Program Policy Unit Manager, at (509) 209-3088 or [lisa.herke@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:lisa.herke@dshs.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director  
Residential Care Services

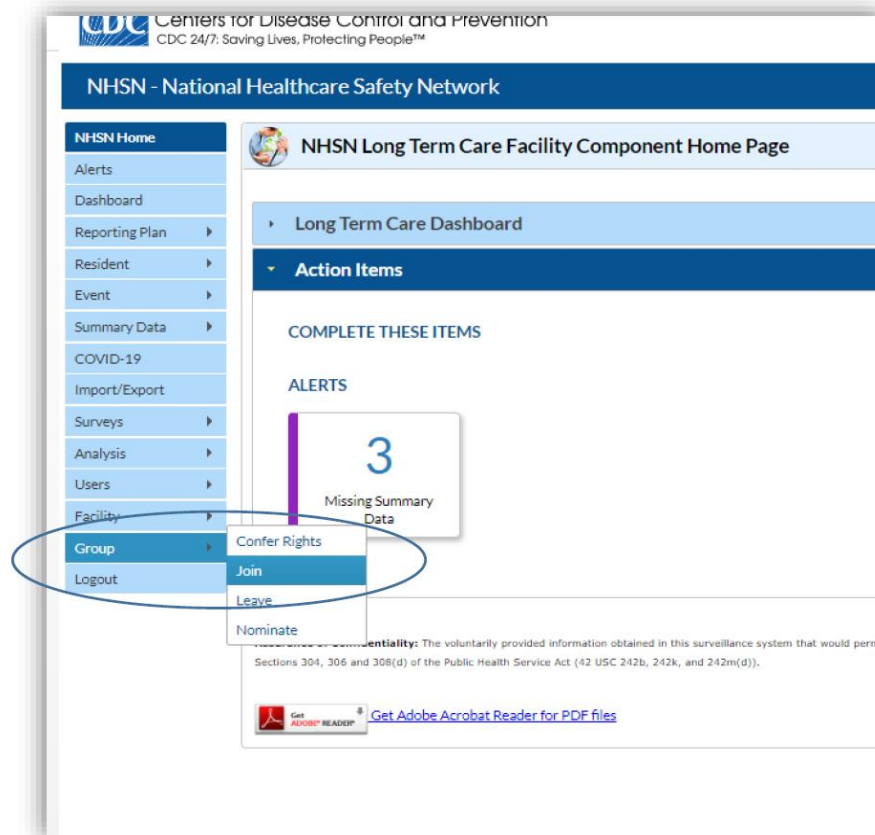
DSHS: "Transforming Lives"

## Joining the Washington State NHSN Group

### Long-term Care Facilities

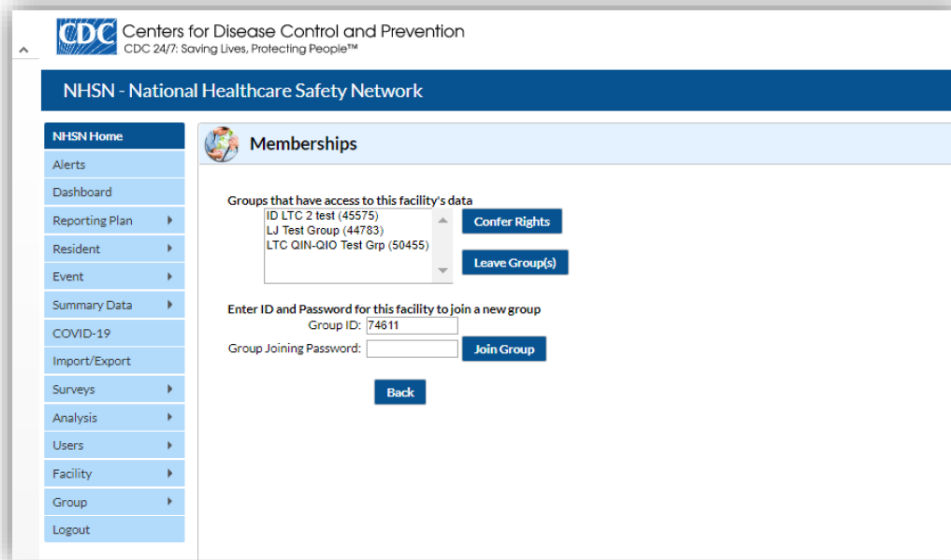
The steps below outline the process to join the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) NHSN Group. Joining the DOH NHSN Group will allow DOH to bulk upload COVID-19 data and view data. Your view may be slightly different depending on your SAMS access.

1. NHSN user with Administrator rights log into NHSN, Patient Safety Component



2. From the left hand menu, select "Group," and then "Join"

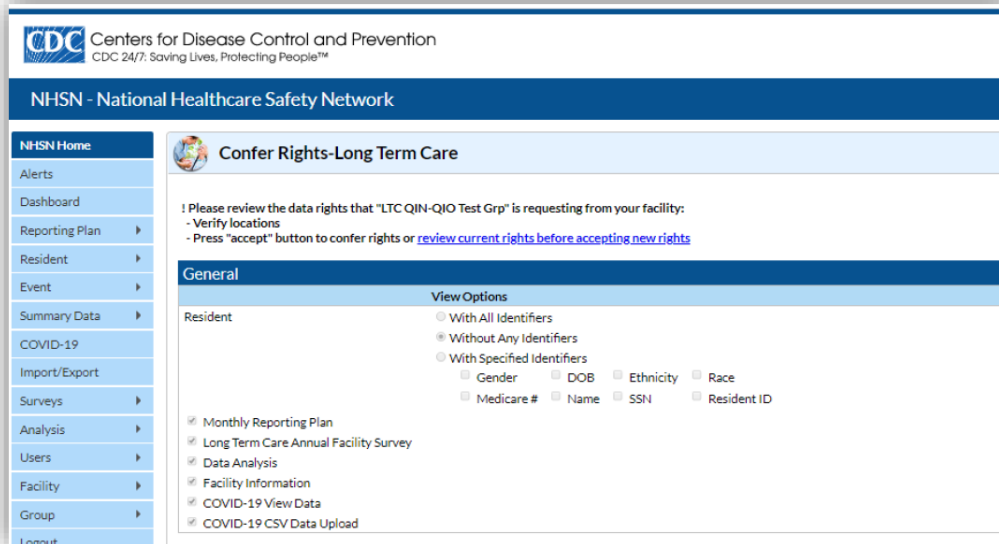
3. Enter:



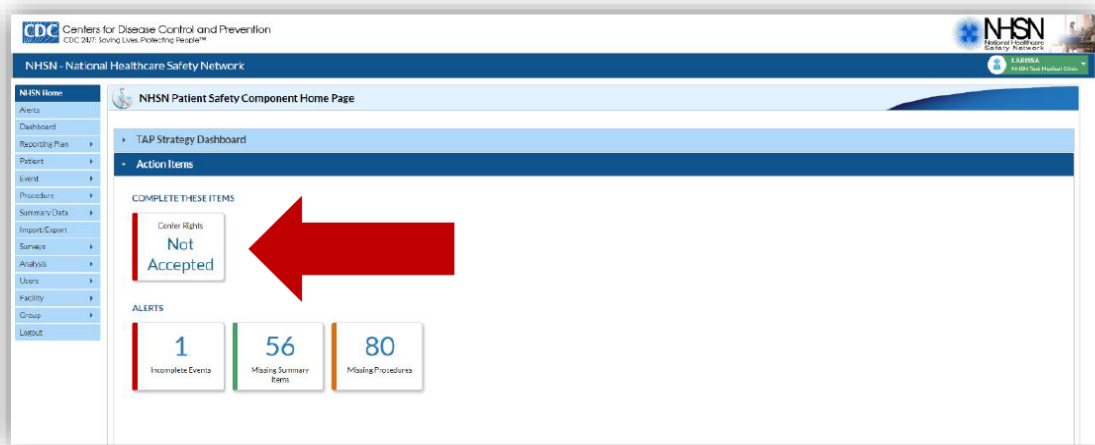
- Group ID: **74611**
- Group Joining Password: **waNHSN1717!**

*The password is case sensitive.*

4. Select "Join Group"
5. After joining the Group, you will be taken to the "Confer Rights-Patient Safety" screen where you will see the data WA State is requesting access to.



- Review the data rights requested, scroll to the bottom of the screen and select “Accept” to allow WA State DOH access to the NHSN data. Select “Back” to cancel the process.
- If a Group makes changes to the data rights requested, the facility is notified immediately upon logging in and asked to “Confer Rights”



Contact Larissa Lewis at [Larissa.Lewis@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Larissa.Lewis@doh.wa.gov) or 206-418-5632 with questions. Some questions may be redirected to [NHSN@cdc.gov](mailto:NHSN@cdc.gov).