



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

October 30, 2020

AL TSA: NH #2020-078
UPDATE ON REPORTING COVID-19 TEST RESULTS

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

On August 25, 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published an interim final rule [CMS-3401-IFC](#) to require nursing homes to test staff for COVID-19. Under the interim final rule, nursing homes with a CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments) waiver who perform testing on-site are required to report test results *“to the Secretary [of Health and Human Services (HHS)] in such form and manner, and at such timing and frequency, as the Secretary may prescribe.”* See administrator letter [#020-064](#) and QSO memo [20-37-CLIA, NH](#).

In a [memo](#), originally published on June 4, 2020 and recently updated, HHS indicated all Medicare and/or Medicaid certified nursing homes that must report test results shall report them directly to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Health and Safety Network (NHSN). NHSN will report the test data to appropriate state and local health departments.

In order to report test results to NHSN, facilities must obtain or upgrade NHSN access to Level-3. Upgrading requires completion of the Secure Access Management System (SAMS) identity verification process. Verified users will be mailed a SAMS grid card to use at the NHSN login.

- **This process can take up to four weeks to be completed, but you will not lose access to NHSN at any time during the process.**
- For facilities already enrolled with NHSN, users can upgrade their access to Level-3 through SAMS, using the instruction at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/covid19/sams-access.html>
- As an alternative, facility users can start the upgrade process with an email to nhsn@cdc.gov with the subject line “Enhancing Data Security.”
- For facilities without any current NHSN access, use this link to enroll with NHSN and add users, or use the nhsn@cdc.gov email to request help: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/enroll.html>
- Frequently asked questions about SAMS: [SAMS FAQs](#)

RCS strongly recommends all facilities have more than one user obtain Level-3 access and be familiar with reporting test results. This will help ensure uninterrupted reporting of test results. There are instructions at the NHSN website for enrolling additional users for the same facility. Do not enroll the facility more than once.

Please remember required reporting of all laboratory test results to NHSN does not substitute for reporting **positive** COVID test results to your local health jurisdiction and **positive and suspected positive** test results to the Residential Care Services’ Complaint Resolution Unit (“the hotline”).

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

Sincerely,

Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

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