

COVID-19: Role of Public Health and Long Term Care Facilities (LTCF) in Preparedness and Response Efforts



Topic	Public Health Role	LTCF Role
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist in identifying resources for diagnostic testing for LTCF, including private and public testing options ● Assure provision of a “baseline “ Point Prevalence Survey (PPS) in partnership with Virginia National Guard, as resources permit ● Provide recommendations regarding testing strategy, including baseline testing, serial testing, or testing related to outbreak response ● Together with partners, Public Health may assist in developing solutions to support ongoing testing in LTCF (HCW) staff as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement testing recommendations for residents and staff per guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF), refer to VDH, CDC and CMS guidance (e.g. baseline testing and repeat testing as appropriate) ○ For Assisted Living Facilities (ALF), refer to Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) guidance ● Ensure access to diagnostic and follow-up testing for both residents and staff. This includes adequate capacity to obtain, administer, and process those tests
Data/Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide aggregate information and data about LTCF cases, deaths and outbreaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report all outbreaks (LTCFs licensed by any state program) and all positive cases (SNFs) to VDH in accordance with the <i>Regulations for Disease Reporting and Control</i>.
PPE and Cloth face coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make recommendations for the appropriate use and /or optimization of (medical-grade) PPE (for health care workers) and cloth face coverings (e.g. other staff, visitors, etc), guided by CDC recommendations ● If urgent shortages are identified, assist the facility in identifying potential sources for PPE and/or assuring connections with partners such as Regional Health Care Coalitions (SNF) and/or Department of Social Services (ALF). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure access to an adequate supply of PPE for healthcare staff and other relevant staff. Ensure education/instruction for donning and doffing PPE. ● Ensure that other relevant individuals (e.g. residents and visitors) have access to cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of disease

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<p>Identification of Cases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow-up on reports of suspected and confirmed cases ● Identify potential source(s) of exposure for the case, and identify all close contacts ● Enroll cases in active monitoring with Local Health Department (LHD) or facility occupational health ● Partner with LTCF clinical and administrative leadership to establish a system to monitor exposed staff and residents ● Preserve the anonymity of patients and practitioners, according to §32.1-41 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i>. In situations where divulging a patient’s name may be required to identify other potentially exposed individuals, VDH will seek permission from the patient for release of information; the release will be conducted in the most minimally compromising manner (such as to a single point of contact in the LTCF Medical Director or Director of Nursing or Infection Prevention point of contact). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distribute educational messages to residents, visitors and staff about COVID-19 symptoms and steps to take if they become ill ● Actively screen all residents for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 daily ● Actively screen all HCP and staff for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to each shift ● Report suspected and confirmed cases to LHD. Assist public health in follow-up of cases ● Partner with LHD to assess any potential HCP or staff exposures and enroll exposed persons into monitoring ● Protect the confidentiality of residents and staff who are part of Case and Contact Investigations ● Implement recommendations for cleaning/disinfection, including areas where cases have been
<p>Isolation of Cases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide recommendations for appropriate isolation/cohorting of patients. ● Provide recommendations regarding discontinuation of isolation or return to work guidance, based on the VDH symptom-, time-, or test-based strategy as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement cohorting of residents, according to guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For SNF, refer to VDH, CDC and CMS guidance ○ For ALFs, refer to VDSS guidance
<p>Follow-up with Contacts of Cases/Outbreak Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that all contacts of cases, within the facility and in the community, have been identified and placed under symptom monitoring and quarantine. Refer contacts for testing as recommended. ● Release from quarantine as indicated, or coordinate for medical care/evaluation if symptoms develop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide regular updates to LHD on the number and locations of residents and staff exposed, asymptomatic, and symptomatic.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate outbreak investigations; provide specific disease prevention and control recommendations to reduce spread of disease. 	
Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide recommendations for COVID-19 infection prevention and control in LTCF settings, including assurance of training ● Provide information about training opportunities related to infection prevention and control ● Use case, contact and outbreak data to inform recommendations for disease prevention and control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement infection control guidance pertaining to screening, universal source control, cohorting, proper use of PPE and/or face coverings, cohorting plans. ● Implement transmission-based precautions per CDC guidance. ● Consider strategies to manage new admissions or readmissions of residents to limit the introduction and/or transmission of COVID-19 within the facility. ● Consider and implement appropriate strategies pertaining to visitation, communal dining, group activities, non-essential staff/visitors, trips outside the facility, etc. ● Assure appropriate training for staff on infection prevention and control. ● Assign an individual with training in infection prevention and control to provide onsite management of COVID-19 prevention and response activities
Communications/ Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide health education messages and messages to reduce the spread of disease. ● Coordinate with facility on public communication (e.g., press releases, media inquiries, etc) ● Communicate summary information on the number of cases and contacts in the jurisdiction, district, and/or region to provide situational awareness for LTCF. Ensure that anonymity of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Widely communicate prevention and control messages, including information about outbreaks, disease prevention and control recommendations, steps to take if illness develops, etc. ● Promote flu vaccination when available and COVID-19 vaccination (if it becomes available)

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	individuals is preserved and that LTCFs have data necessary for adequate planning and preparations.	
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