

Closing a Healthcare Facility to New Admissions or Readmissions during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Conversational Framework for the Local Health Department, Long-Term Care Admissions Coordinator, and Hospital Discharge Planner

Note: This guidance supersedes all previous guidance.

In response to an outbreak, closure of facilities to new admissions may be recommended as a standard part of Virginia Department of Health (VDH) disease control measures. However, any decision to close and/or accept new admissions or readmissions must be based on a risk assessment and tailored to the situation. The decision to close a facility to new admissions should be made in consultation with the local health department.

The following criteria should be met when making a decision on a long-term care facility (LTCF) accepting new admissions or readmissions:

- The number of COVID-19 cases identified in the facility (staff & residents) is decreasing.
- No evidence of widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the facility.
- Facility is compliant with [best practices](#) for infection prevention and control.
- Enough space for [cohorting](#) positive versus negative residents, and an observational unit for new admissions is available.
- Adequate staffing, PPE, and other supplies.
- The facility has a plan to manage new admissions and readmissions.

For additional guidance, see [VDH COVID-19 Guidance for Nursing Homes](#), [VDH COVID-19 Response Toolkit for Assisted Living Facilities](#), and [VDH Recommendations for Hospitalized Patients Being Discharged to a LTCF During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

While limited or temporary closure of a LTCF to new admissions may be needed when COVID-19 cases are identified, closing to new admissions for two full incubation periods (28 days) is not currently recommended. Due to surges in COVID-19 cases, there is a need to be able to move patients through the continuum of care, including from acute care into post-acute care facilities. **Therefore, flexibility is necessary; only close LTCFs for a limited number of days to ensure an acute outbreak is under control and the facility has the resources needed to safely care for residents.** Local health departments and healthcare facilities will need to balance the goal of disease prevention and control with the importance of maintaining healthcare bed capacity during a time of COVID-19 surge.

Please note that CMS has not instructed nursing homes/skilled nursing facilities to close to new admissions as part of an outbreak response. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CMS has relaxed some policies to better allow for the transfer of patients. Additional information can be found on the [CMS website](#) and [COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Blanket Waivers for Health Care Providers](#).