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Dear Member:

Order Your Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Test Cards Through State Application

Today, Maine DHHS announced its plan for distributing Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Test Cards as follows:

The Federal government is distributing two-thirds of its 150 million to states and one-third directly to health care providers. Please note, Maine providers getting Ag Cards from the Federal government will not get them from the state. MHCA is aware of about 35 Assisted Living facilities in receipt of these.

Maine will distribute its share:

- Three-fourths of its amount to one distributor who has sites across Maine, which will be drive-through and accessible to the public;
- One-fourth to organizations that meet basic requirements and can help target high-risk populations, high-risk settings, and places with difficulty accessing testing.

The State's plan allows all interested and qualified organizations to apply for the Ag Cards, with an allocation process that aims to ensure both access for all people in Maine and a priority for those at greater risk of COVID-19. Please review the [attached guidance](#) prior to applying for Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Test Cards.

To apply, please use the following link: [Application for BinaxNOW Ag Test Cards](#)

MHCA, ME DLC and OADS meets with Representatives from National CMS and CDC Leaders

Today MHCA participated in a question and answer session with representatives from the regional and federal offices of CMS and the federal CDC. During this session questions related to screening, testing, visitation and community positivity were discussed. In the next few days MHCA will be creating an FAQ on this call for members to review. We anticipate having this available to membership for next Tuesday's Briefing.

Governor Mills Continues State of Civil Emergency as Maine Fights COVID-19

Governor Janet Mills today [extended the State of Civil Emergency \(PDF\)](#) for thirty days through November 27, 2020. The Governor's decision to extend the emergency is in line with nearly every other state in the nation which have [ongoing emergency declarations](#), according to the National Governors Association. For example, the State of Vermont [extended](#) its State of Emergency earlier this month.

"Rising case counts show that this virus is still very much among us and we must take every precaution to slow its spread," said Governor Mills. "If we protect ourselves and protect one another by washing our hands frequently, maintaining six feet distance between ourselves and others, and wearing a face covering whenever possible, we can limit the spread of this dangerous virus, ensure our businesses survive these colder months, and keep our schools open as we enter winter."

A State of Civil Emergency allows Maine to draw down critical Federal resources and to deploy all available tools to respond to and contain COVID-19. This is Governor Mills' eighth extension of the State of Civil Emergency. Under Maine law, Proclamations of Civil Emergencies may be issued in thirty day increments.

Federal Agencies Warn of Cybercrime Threats to Healthcare Organizations

Maine DHHS officials shared the following warning with MHCA this week:
The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have credible information of an increased and imminent cybercrime threat to U.S. hospitals and healthcare providers.

CISA, FBI, and HHS have released [AA20-302A Ransomware Activity Targeting the Healthcare and Public Health Sector](#) that details both the threat and practices that healthcare organizations should continuously engage in to help manage the risk posed by ransomware and other cyber threats. The advisory references the [joint CISA MS-ISAC Ransomware Guide](#) that provides a ransomware response checklist that can serve as a ransomware-specific addendum to organization cyber incident response plans.

CISA, FBI, and HHS are sharing this information in order to provide a warning to healthcare providers to ensure that they take timely and reasonable precautions to protect their networks from these threats. CISA encourages users and administrators to review CISA's [Ransomware webpage](#) for additional information.

SNFs Must Upgrade to NHSN SAMS Level-3 Access to Meet CLIA Reporting Requirements

Skilled nursing facilities are now required to report point-of-care (POC) test results performed under their CLIA waiver to the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) system. More information is available [here](#).

This requires an upgrade from SAMS Level-1 access to SAMS Level-3 access. Centers should take action immediately as this process can take up to four weeks. While this requirement is in effect now, AHCA/NCAL has been told that enforcement discretion will be utilized until November 20. Instructions on upgrading to SAMS Level-3 are available [here](#).

Assisted living communities can still report to either the state or NHSN to meet the POC test reporting requirement. However, if they choose to use NHSN they must upgrade to SAMS Level-3. For more information, please see upcoming webinars:

Webinar: [Reporting Results of Point of Care Testing for COVID-19: A New NHSN Pathway](#)

October 30: 2-3 PM ET

November 2: 12:30-1:30 PM ET

Hosted by CDC

The CDC is hosting two identical training webinars to introduce their new their National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) LTCF COVID-19 Module. **Register for [October 30](#) or [November 2](#)**

Free Dementia Education from AgingME

AgingME, the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) would like to share that they will be offering **Dementia Reconsidered**, at no charge, by Dr. Susan Wehry. The 2-hour session offers a unique approach to teaching interdisciplinary, person-directed support for, and care of, persons living with dementia. Dr. Wehry, Director, AgingME: Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) describes the training below:

Colleagues,

We know how hard it is to find time for training, especially during the additional challenges of the pandemic. I have re-designed my original training for trainers on person-centered dementia care in a way that I hope will optimize the use of time, provide practical and usable tips and a forum for discussion and consultation on specific challenges.

Participation in this introductory session, will give you and your staff access to a fully scripted, on-line curriculum (also provided free of charge) that can be used at any time by your staff developers over the next year. We hope you find it useful.

*Sincerely,
Dr. Wehry*

Participants can choose one of two sessions: November 10 and November 18. Please choose the session that best fits your field. For more details, please open the attached flyer and the link to register: <https://sites.une.edu/gwep/dementia-reconsidered/>.

If you have any questions, please contact 207-602-2095 or email tfaybabcock@une.edu.

Thank you for all you do to care for your residents and staff.

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