



Visit our COVID-19 Page Here

Dear Member:

Today's CDC Call for Congregate Care Providers Garnered 650 Participants

Dr. Shah, Maine CDC Director, kicked off today's CDC call for congregate care providers with an situational update on COVID-19. Unfortunately, as community spread increases, so does the risk that COVID-19 can enter your buildings. Dr. Shah urged providers to shore up their infection control plans and best practices to prevent and/or contain the spread of COVID-19. Representatives from Maine CDC, DHHS, Division of Licensing, and OADS also reviewed protocols, practices and regulatory expectations of providers. The call was recorded and MHCA will share the file with members as soon as it is available.

OADS Updates Assisted Housing Guidance

Last week, OADS issued updated guidance on Testing, Visitation and Other Community Engagement Activities in Assisted Housing Settings, effective October 30, 2020. The updated information supplements and clarifies previously issued guidance. Please see the following:

[LTCF-and-AH-FAQs.pdf](#)
[Testing-CommEngagement-Table.pdf](#)

DLC Clarifies New Admission and Essential Visit Return Procedures

Recently, MHCA member facilities have inquired about current CDC recommendations on new admissions and essential visits out of the facility. According to the Division of Licensing, facilities will be surveyed to written requirements in CMS regulations, or written CDC guidance. Current CDC guidance can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/nursing-homes-responding.html>

In summation:

- Even with a negative COVID test from the hospital upon discharge and admission to a facility, the resident would require full PPE and 14 days on the observation unit.
- For outside the facility essential visits (e.g., Doctor's visits): residents need to practice source control while out but don't need to quarantine when they return.

According to the CDC, if your facility is using a negative COVID test (within 24 hours) as the manner in which to determine COVID-19 status and the test is negative, then would you not need to quarantine for 14 days and use full PPE. Note, that a negative COVID-19 test in an asymptomatic person is not absolute and there is potential the person could become positive while still within the incubation period. A facility should review community prevalence of COVID-19 and any other potential risk factors (any known exposures, are they coming from an area of high prevalence or a facility with ongoing outbreaks, resident risk, etc.) when developing their

plan for admission/readmission to facilities.

For any individual where there is concern for known exposure to COVID-19 or resident is exhibiting signs and symptoms, they should be quarantined/isolated respectively.

Maine CDC Requests POC Tests be Reported into REDCap; Nursing Homes May Use as Interim Process

Under federal regulation, any provider performing antigen testing MUST report all positive and negative results to the public health department. Nursing Homes must use NHSN once they have obtained the Level 3 security access. NHSN will share data with public health departments. Any entity outside of a nursing home (ie Assisted Housing) has the choice of using NHSN or the State Public Health Department Process.

Maine's state reporting process, the REDCap online reporting system, recently went live. If you are a nursing home but are not ready to report in NHSN, you should use the state process until you can migrate to NHSN. If you are an Assisted Housing/Living provider, you will most likely be using the REDCap option.

In recently issued [POC Reporting Guidance](#), Maine CDC requests that all Point of Care (POC) tests be reported through the REDCap online reporting system (unless and until you are using NHSN). Facilities that use the BinaxNOW COVID-19 Antigen test must report all results through REDCap. Results of every test conducted must be reported via the online reporting tool within 24 hours. This includes negative, positive, and inconclusive test results. After facilities/organizations register as reporting organizations, they will be sent a unique link that is tied to their facility and CLIA license or waiver. Facilities/organization should not register more than one time. If your facility/organization misplaces the link to submit POC results, email redcap.dhhs@maine.gov to obtain the unique URL/link.

Each facility/organization that will use the REDCap reporting system needs to register at https://redcap.link/MECDC_POC_Registration. The facility will need to identify one individual to be the reporter. This can be anyone (Infection Control, Nurse, Admin, Director etc.) who would be able to answer questions about the facility if there is a question about a submission. For more information on the registration process, CDC requirements and detailed instruction on how to use the REDCap system, please see the [POC Reporting Guidance](#).

Reminder - Tomorrow's "Wednesday" LTC DHHS Call Cancelled Due to Holiday

Tomorrow's LTC DHHS call will be cancelled due to the Veterans Day holiday. The next call in the regular cycle will be **Wednesday, November 25th at 1:00 pm**. MHCA reminds providers to use the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7LQPC9Z> to submit questions prior to the call.

Access the meeting:

<https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/8632543850?pwd=ZEErTktMSkZpNGc5SG56SjFmSUUpWUT09>

Meeting ID: 863 254 3850

Passcode: .uA\$8&Gv

One tap mobile

+16468769923,,8632543850# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 863 254 3850

Find your local number: <https://mainestate.zoom.us/u/kdYSKZCB2X>

BinaxNOW Ag Testing ZOOM Call for Interested Users

As previously reported, Maine DHHS has received a significant allocation of the new Abbott Labs BinaxNOW COVID-19 Antigen (Ag) Cards for rapid point-of-care testing from the federal government, and is making them available for specific uses in clinical and community settings.

ME DHHS plans to distribute the BinaxNOW Ag cards to clinical and community sites that are prioritized for receipt of these tests, have (or get) a CLIA Certificate of Waiver, and meet the other defined requirements as outlined in the [ME DHHS Guidance document](#) for use of BinaxNOW Ag tests, and the [ME DHHS online application](#) that "end user" organizations must use to order tests.

There will be an informational ZOOM call on Thursday, November 12th from 3-4 pm. Join the meeting here:

MHCA in the News

- <https://www.pressherald.com/2020/10/29/families-face-difficult-decisions-as-holidays-approach-and-virus-cases-rise/>
- <https://www.pressherald.com/2020/11/06/can-maine-reverse-its-troubling-covid-19-trend-experts-say-yes-but-it-will-take-work/>
- <https://wgme.com/news/local/maine-cdc-investigates-growing-coronavirus-outbreaks>

FREE CEU Opportunity for Maine Providers: Back to Basics: Sometimes the Answer is Not a New Shiny Penny!

MHCA, in partnership with the Maine Alliance for Resident Centered Care is excited to bring you a free education opportunity through Pioneer Network: Back to Basics: Sometimes the Answer is Not a New Shiny Penny! Thursday, November 19, 2:00 – 3:00 pm EST. As health care gets more complex and the acuity in all settings increases, there is a tendency to focus all our energy looking for answers in innovation and technology. No question there is a lot we can learn from these, but sometimes what we are needing is not that new shiny penny. This webinar will focus on some very basic concepts and practices that remain tried and true but have gotten forgotten over time such as creating pleasant bathing, building community, helping residents to move freely in the environment, learning to speak the language of dementia and recognizing that risks are a part of life. Join this webinar to take a fresh look at “old” concepts and practices.

- FOLLOW THIS LINK TO REGISTER: <https://www.pioneernetwork.net/events/back-to-the-basics/>
- When using the following free code for Maine providers you will see an opportunity to "pay what you can", so enter 0.
- The code for free attendance for your team is: MainePN
- The live webinar program has been approved for Continuing Education for 1.0 total participant hours by NAB/NCERS—Approval #20211118-1.00-A65717-DL. Registration closes 1 hour prior to the event.

OSHA Releases COVID-19 Respiratory Protection Guidance for Long Term Care Employees

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released a new resource: [Respiratory Protection Guidance for the Employers of Those Working in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, and Other Long Term Care Facilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic.](#) In this resource, OSHA reviews requirements around PPE and includes the key elements of the respiratory protection program. The resource includes temporary enforcement discretion related to the respiratory protection standard during COVID-19. Guidance clearly states that for OSHA to exercise enforcement discretion, “employers must demonstrate and document good-faith efforts to comply with OSHA standards.” This includes documenting all attempts to procure required PPE. AHCA/NCAL’s consultants with Littler Mendelson have developed a [template](#) respiratory protection program that can be tailored to your organization’s needs. Additional OSHA guidance on reporting employee cases of COVID-19 and steps to take when PPE is critically low, including N-95 respirators, can be found on the AHCA/NCAL COVID-19 [resource website](#). Providers can also find updated OSHA guidance on COVID-19 on OSHA’s COVID-19 [website](#).

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

Nadine L. Grosso
Vice President and Director of Communications
ngrosso@mehca.org