



Visit our COVID-19 Page
Here

Dear Member:

Notes from Today's CDC Medical Director/Clinician Call 12/15/2020

Most of the discussion from today's call was regarding COVID-19 vaccination of staff and residents. There were many links shared with helpful information for facilities as we embark on this journey. MHCA has linked these resources below.

Important Links from Maine CDC, DHHS and Vaccination Programming:

- Maine CDC Vaccination Webpage: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/covid-19-providers/index.shtml>
- Email for questions related to COVID Vaccinations: c19vaccine.mecdc@maine.gov
- CDC Post Vaccine Considerations for HCW: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/post-vaccine-considerations-healthcare-personnel.html>
- US CDC webinar on 12/13/20 Regarding Vaccination: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/pfizer-biontech-vaccine-what-Clinicians-need-to-know.pdf>
- Pfizer vaccine FDA Fact Sheet for Recipients & Caregivers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>
- CVS information on verbal consent: <https://info.omnicare.com/rs/095-VIX-581/images/COVID%2019%20Vaccine%20Consent%20Process.pdf>
- US CDC Communication Toolkit regarding COVID Vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-systems-communication-toolkit.html>
- 12/14/2020 COCA Call Slide Deck on Vaccine Safety for Clinicians: https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/ppt/2020/COCA-Call-Slides_12-14-2020.pdf
- NHSN COVID vaccine reporting information (After 12/20/2020): <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/weekly-covid-vac/index.html>

NHSN Reporting of COVID vaccine: CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) will release new weekly COVID-19 vaccination data reporting modules. This training will focus on the modules that allow for reporting of COVID-19 vaccination data among healthcare personnel working in long-term care facilities and residents of long-term care facilities.

Join the webinar on Tuesday, December 22 at 1:30 pm EST. You will learn how to collect and enter data for these new reporting features. This is a listen-only webinar. Capacity is limited, so please register today. Registration link is below.

Topic: New Weekly COVID-19 Vaccination Data Reporting for Long-term Care Facilities

Date: Dec. 22, 2020
Time: 1:30 - 2:30 PM EST

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://cdc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_MUdg4fyyTACFSXjt9gOeTw

Physician Visits: Per Bill Montejo, Maine DHHS Division of Licensing: There has been a question regarding physician visits/recertifications for residents in nursing homes; specifically, the question being asked is if the physician/NP/PA is sick and unable to conduct a patient visit/recertification, has CMS issued any waivers or allowed for delays of these visits?

The last CMS emergency waivers issued/updated on 12/1/2020, indicate the following related to physician visits:

Physician Visits: 42 CFR 483.30(c)(3). CMS is waiving the requirement at § 483.30(c)(3) that all required physician visits (not already exempted in § 483.30(c)(4) and (f)) must be made by the physician personally. We are modifying this provision to permit physicians to delegate any required physician visit to a nurse practitioner (NPs), physician assistant, or clinical nurse

specialist who is not an employee of the facility, who is working in collaboration with a physician, and who is licensed by the State and performing within the state's scope of practice laws.

Note to Facilities: These actions will assist in potential staffing shortages, maximize the use of medical personnel, and protect the health and safety of residents during the PHE. We note that we are not waiving the requirements for the frequency of required physician visits at § 483.30(c)(1). As set out above, we have only modified the requirement to allow for the requirement to be met by an NP, physician assistant, or clinical nurse specialist, and via telehealth or other remote communication options, as appropriate. In addition, we note that we are not waiving our requirements for physician supervision in § 483.30(a)(1), and the requirement at § 483.30(d)(3) for the facility to provide or arrange for the provision of physician services 24 hours a day, in case of an emergency. It is important that the physician be available for consultation regarding a resident's care.

MHCA Webpage Features COVID Vaccination Resources

Over the past few weeks there has been a flood of information regarding the much anticipated COVID-19 vaccinations. MHCA has synthesized the resource links and tool tip documents into one location on our COVID webpage under the vaccination header [here](#). As more information comes in, MHCA will continue to post links and resource documents to assist your homes as we move forward with wide spread vaccinations.

Federal CDC Resources for Answering Tough Resident and Family questions regarding COVID Vaccine

The CDC has put together a resource page that outlines some topics patients/residents ask about most vaccines and tips for how to answer their questions. You can find this information [here](#).

State holds twice weekly vaccine informational calls beginning 12/15/2020

As part of the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (and given the very exciting news about the recent FDA approval of the first vaccine!), Maine DHHS has launched a set of educational efforts to offer information for Maine clinicians on the COVID-19 vaccines and support their efforts to build the knowledge & trust needed to ensure a successful vaccination effort statewide.

Given busy clinician schedules, the State is offering a series of short (30min) "COVID-19 Vaccine Info Sessions" that it will host twice/week starting today, Tues, Dec 15th, for the next several months at the following times:

- **Tuesdays at 7:30 - 8AM**
- **Fridays at 12N – 12:30PM**

The sessions will offer brief didactic sessions on the vaccine development & approval process, followed by time for questions & discussions. Clinicians are welcome to attend one or multiple sessions. The sessions will be held via Zoom using the following log-in and/or call-in info for all sessions:

- Zoom/web: <https://zoom.us/j/6218434986>
- Meeting ID: 621 843 4986
- Passcode: 338847
- Phone: One tap mobile: +13017158592,,6218434986#,,,,,0#,,338847#

Is IV monoclonal antibody therapy available for residents should the physician wish to provide it?

Bamlanivimab and the other monoclonal antibody preparations are being shipped directly to one of the four major hospitals in the state: Maine Medical Center (Portland), Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center (Bangor), Central Maine Medical Center (Lewiston) and MaineGeneral (Augusta). Of note: Maine's allotment is low, medical systems within Maine have agreed that only patients meeting certain criteria (e.g. BMI of ≥ 35 and age ≥ 65) can receive the drug. If a facility medical director or a resident's individual prescribing is interested in providing such treatment you will need to direct any questions or requests for the drug to the pharmacy in the hospital nearest to your center.

Provider Relief Fund FAQs for Vaccine Distribution

Last week, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released additional information on using Provider Relief Funds for vaccine administration. These additions are noted in an updated PRF FAQ [document](#) and all of the Provider Relief Fund FAQs can be accessed [here](#).

In particular, note the following updates:

Provider Relief Funds may be used for administration after other sources of revenue have been exhausted, including:

- Direct patient billing;
- Commercial insurance;
- Medicare/Medicaid;
- Reimbursement from the Provider Relief Fund COVID-19 Claims Reimbursement to Health Care Providers and Facilities for Testing;
- Treatment, and Vaccine Administration for the Uninsured; or
- Funds received from FEMA or SBA/Department of Treasury's Paycheck Protection Program

- Providers may use Provider Relief Fund payments to pay taxes for "healthcare related expenses attributable to coronavirus," except for Nursing Home Infection Control Distribution payments.

AHCA creates free resource to share with families

AHCA has created a free resource for facilities to share with their residents' families who are struggling to understand the challenges of Coping with COVID. The YouTube video is about 25 minutes long and covers a gamut of information that is directly aimed at the families and how they can support their loved ones, their community, and the facility. Facilities can share this YouTube video with families so that they can understand the grief and trauma that is associated with COVID and the challenges of keeping the virus from spreading. More information can be found on our website which is located here: <https://educate.ahcanca.org/CopingWithCovid>.

Next CMS Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF)/Long Term Care (LTC) Open Door Forum

Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM Eastern Time (ET)

This call will be Conference Call Only. To participate by phone:

Dial: 1-888-455-1397 & Conference Passcode: 9375124

Please dial-in at least 15 minutes before call start time.

- Conference Leaders: Todd Smith & Jill Darling
 - Opening Remarks
 - Announcements & Updates
 - Public Reporting Announcement
 - <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>
 - <https://data.cms.gov/provider-data/>
 - Open Q&A

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