



Visit our COVID-19 Page Here

Dear Member:

CDC Updates Interim IPC Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Yesterday, CDC updated its Infection Prevention and Control recommendations for healthcare personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic. A summary of the changes to the guidance follows:

- Provided different options for screening individuals (healthcare personnel, patients, visitors) prior to their entry into a healthcare facility
- Provided information on factors that could impact thermometer readings
- Provided resources for evaluating and managing ventilation systems in healthcare facilities
- Added link to Frequently Asked Questions about use of Personal Protective Equipment

Please take the time to review the changes here: [infection-control-recommendations](#)

Final Reminder for Pharmacy Partnership Sign Up – Deadline is Tomorrow

The deadline for long term care facilities to sign up for the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program is tomorrow, Friday, November 6. Please don't wait to register for the federal government's [national vaccine distribution program](#) for long term care residents.

Nursing homes should register via [NHSN](#). Assisted living communities and other congregate settings should sign up through this [online survey](#).

A facility list of those already signed up was provided earlier this week. According to federal CDC contacts, a few facilities were inadvertently left off that list. MHCA staff has contacted members impacted by the omission to follow up but we encourage you to verify your sign-up selections as follows:

- SNFs can review their data in [NHSN](#) by going in through the calendar view.
- [REDCap](#) can be reviewed using the unique code that the facility would have received when initially filling out the form.

Any questions can be sent to eocevent494@cdc.gov.

Following Record Number of COVID-19 Cases, Governor Mills Announces New Face Covering Executive Order

Today, on the day Maine recorded 183 new cases of COVID-19, the highest single-day increase since the beginning of the pandemic, Governor Janet Mills [announced an Executive Order](#) requiring Maine people to wear face coverings in public settings, regardless of the ability to maintain physical distance. The new order strengthens an earlier one stating that face coverings must be worn only when physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Earlier this week, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker issued a similar order. Additionally, owners and

operators of all indoor public settings in Maine must now post plainly visible signs notifying entrants of the requirement to wear cloth face coverings, and may deny service or entry for non-compliance. Previously, only certain types of businesses like large retail businesses were responsible for implementing measures requiring customers to wear face coverings.

Wearing a face covering is proven to significantly reduce the spread of COVID-19. Maine's 7-day positivity rate, while still significantly lower than other states, has more than doubled in the past two weeks to 1.52 percent while hospitalizations have also increased.

Face coverings are required for all children age 5 and older in public settings, including school and childcare settings, and are recommended for children ages 2 to 4 unless deemed developmentally inappropriate. Exemptions continue to exist for those who have serious medical conditions or who are otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Governor Mills' Executive Order also reduces indoor gathering limits. The gathering limit on outdoor activities remains at 100 people under existing guidelines, with physical distancing and the use of face coverings. Occupancy limits for retail establishments remain at 5 people per 1,000 square feet of shopping space. The Mills Administration had previously increased indoor seating limits to 50 percent of permitted capacity or 100 people, whichever was less.

Next Week's Wednesday LTC DHHS Call Cancelled Due to Holiday

Next Wednesday's LTC DHHS call will be cancelled due to the Veterans Day holiday. OADS is planning on sending a separate communication next week in lieu of the call to update providers as appropriate. The next call in the regular cycle will be **Wednesday, November 25th at 1:00 pm**. MHCA will resend the ZOOM meeting link as it gets closer and reminds providers to use the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7LQPC9Z> to submit questions.

Clarification from Maine DLRS on Testing Results for Vendors

According to Maine DHHS DLRS, the regulation requires documentation, not a copy of the test result. As such, a letter from the vendor, on company letter head that attest the employee was/is tested at an interval consistent with the facility's (monthly/weekly/biweekly) would be fine. If the letter does not provide results (positive/negative) then it should contain language that the vendor agrees to notify the facility immediately upon receipt of a positive employee test result so the facility can begin the discussion with the Maine CDC for universal testing. Additionally, facilities are required to have policies and procedures for staff who refuse testing.

As a reminder: **"Facility staff"** includes employees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, and caregivers who provide care and services to residents on behalf of the facility, and students in the facility's nurse aide training programs or from affiliated academic institutions. For the purpose of testing "individuals providing services under arrangement and volunteers," facilities should prioritize those individuals who are regularly in the facility (e.g., weekly) and have contact with residents or staff. *We note that the facility may have a provision under its arrangement with a vendor or volunteer that requires them to be tested from another source (e.g., their employer or on their own). However, the facility is still required to obtain documentation that the required testing was completed during the timeframe that corresponds to the facility's testing frequency*

SAVE THE Days/Times/Dates for ProjectECHO Launch

MHCA is thrilled to let you know that the New England hub of the Nursing Home ProjectECHO will launch in just a few days. The schedule will be consistent so feel free to save the following days/times in your calendar. The link to the calls will be sent directly to you if you registered to participate by UNH and UNV.

- Tuesdays 2:00pm-3:30pm EST (starting November 10th)
- Wednesdays 10:30am-12:00pm EST (starting November 11th) New Hampshire and Maine Genesis Cohort
- Thursdays 2:00pm-3:30pm EST (starting November 12th)

MHCA will be participating as an observer and will be able to share learnings on calls with members who have not been able to register to participate.

Notice of Public Hearing: Immunization Requirements For Healthcare Workers

The Department is proposing routine technical rule changes to amend 10-144 CMR chapter 264, Immunization for Healthcare Workers to update exemption requirements following recent law changes; update the definition section to add public health threat and extreme public health

emergency and revise Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded (ICF/MR) to reflect Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID), aligning with CMS language; remove H1N1 2009-10 immunization requirements; and add seasonal influenza to the list of vaccine preventable diseases for which designated healthcare facility employees must show proof of immunization or documented immunity, or provide appropriate exemption documentation. Rule changes are proposed to clarify the Department's authority to impose control measures due to a public health emergency or an extreme public health emergency, including, but not limited to, requiring vaccinations and exclusions from the workplace to protect public health and minimize the impact from the specific notifiable communicable disease by reducing the potential disease spread by healthcare workers.

- Date, time and location of PUBLIC HEARING: 9:00 a.m.- 12:00 noon; Monday, November 23, 2020
- Zoom Meeting link: https://mainestate.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwkfuGtqDssEtDp-0Znu7Rqvt_cXCjDhrvm
- Meeting ID: 889 9856 0684
- Password: M@ineCDC1

ICYMI: Post-Election Analysis Member Call with AHCA CEO Mark Parkinson This Friday

On Friday, November 6 at 2 PM Eastern, AHCA/NCAL CEO Mark Parkinson will [provide an analysis](#) of the impact of the recent election results on the long term care sector. All members are invited to participate.

Registration is limited, and the webinar will be recorded and available for playback within 24 hours.

How to Register:

- To avoid technical problems, use Google Chrome.
- Members will need to [log in](#) using their existing AHCA/NCAL username and password first.
- Once you are logged in to the website, you will be able to register by clicking the green register button at the top of the page.
- If you have forgotten your password, [click here](#).
- If you are new to the site, you can create an account [here](#). Answer all fields on the create an account page- especially locating your company name. You can search by name or zip code. After creating an account, you will be able to register for the webinar.

Please email educate@ahca.org for additional assistance.

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

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