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**Dear Member:**

**Maine CDC Transitioning Ongoing LTC Vaccination to LTC Pharmacies**

MHCA met with Maine CDC representatives on Friday to discuss the CDC’s intention to transition the vaccination of new LTC residents and staff from public health nursing to LTC Pharmacies. LTC Pharmacies will have an initial vaccine supply that is being allocated from the federal Retail Pharmacy Program. Ongoing allocation, however, will be based on utilization, so it will be important for Maine nursing homes and assisted living facilities to align with LTC Pharmacies and secure a process for vaccinating your new residents and staff as soon as possible if you don’t already have a relationship.

Additionally, MHCA is working with the Maine Immunization Program on a protocol for providers to use the Maine Immunization Information System (ImmPact) to ascertain the vaccination status of new residents. We will notify members when the protocol, and corresponding training, is available.

**Mark Your Calendar: MeCDC Director Dr. Nirav Shah to Host Zoom Call for Maine Congregate Care Providers**

Dr. Shah will be hosting another COVID-19 Congregate Care Zoom meeting on Friday May 14<sup>th</sup> from 11:00-12:00. The Zoom information is below.

To attend this call please use the link below:

<https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/82034877058?pwd=cjlleWhlQkZTUHpCUiVHWU5HVGYrdz09>  
Meeting ID: 820 3487 7058  
Passcode: YG2guG&M

**Notes from the ME DHHS Medical Directors/Clinicians Call Today, May 4, 2021**

Maine DHHS provided the following definition of staff when it comes to testing routinely - From CMS QSO-20-38 revised:

- “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.”

Guidance on Visitation and Testing of Fully Vaccinated HCW:

- Federal CMS and CDC have updated guidance [QSO 20-38-NH](#), and [QSO 20-39-NH](#). The Maine congregate care guidance tables will be updated soon. For the most recent table guidance bookmark this [link](#).

- Outdoor Visitation: CMS clarified and it is addressed in the soon to be released Maine guidance tables, that outdoor visit is ALLOWABLE at all times including in outbreak. The exception is if the individual resident is in quarantine or isolation.
- Surveillance Testing of Fully Vaccinated HCWs: Maine is generally trying to align their guidance with federal CMS and CDC guidance. **In the update from CDC and CMS: Fully vaccinated HCWs do not need to be included in the facilities surveillance testing.** To see the specific guidance language see CMS QSO 20-38 update [here](#).
- For Fully Vaccinated Visitors - what may homes ask regarding their vaccination status? According to CMS, you can ask visitors and encourage vaccination but you cannot require proof. This is based on the honor system.
- For indoor visitation: Any limitations to visitors for indoor visits should be reasonable and based on ability to meet infection control guidelines. You can limit the number of visitors if you have reasonable restriction OR physical plant issues such as double occupancy rooms or the inability to socially distant multiple families. Any restrictions to the number of visitors should follow general infection control practices.
- Can residents and families visit OUTDOORS without masks? This is scenario dependent and will be addressed in the soon to be released Maine table guidance.

Communal dining: How should we handle vaccinated and unvaccinated residents who want to eat in the same dining area? This is scenario dependent and will be addressed in the soon to be released Maine table guidance.

The Maine LTC Ombudsman is partnering with Maine OADS to provide a weekly call for residents of congregate care settings. The call is titled "Drop In with Dr. Susan" and is held every Thursday at 10:00am. These calls will provide an opportunity for residents to discuss their pandemic experience. Follow this link to attend: <https://une.zoom.us/j/95986955695>

Vaccine Availability: For individuals who wish to be vaccinated most vaccine clinics have same day availability. HCWs can be encouraged to use the following links for walk in locations in MaineHealth: <https://www.mainehealth.org/Coronavirus-COVID-19/Walk-In-COVID-19-Vaccination> or can call the Maine COVID Vaccine line at 888-962-6062 to get a vaccine appointment.

### Federal CDC Releases Updated Guidance on Aerosol Generating Procedures

On April 27, 2021 the federal CDC has updated infection control recommendations for healthcare settings which include the recommendations for aerosol generating procedures such as nebulizer treatments. The following is a summary of the guidance specific to AGPs:

- **If county transmission is moderate-high , resident is in quarantine or isolation, or resident is on a unit with quarantined or isolated persons** then all COVID-19 prevention measures apply: staff in full PPE (*gowns, gloves, N95 or higher respirator, eye protection*), keep room door closed during procedure and until room air has been exchanged after procedure, post signage to alert those entering the room, etc.
- **All other situations** follow routine AGP practices + source control (*surgical mask with fluid barrier protection preferred*). If county positivity is low, then federal CDC doesn't put any restrictions upon roommate status and AGPs. Noting, that there will be assuming of some risk in this situation.

Federal CDC Reference links:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>
- List of AGPs: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Finfection-control-faq.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Finfection-control-faq.html)

Sincerely,

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