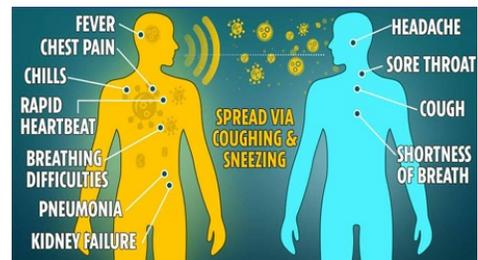




Maine Health Care Association



Dear Member,

Today, the Maine CDC announced two presumptive positive cases of COVID-19, bringing Maine's total to three cases (pending final confirmation from the federal CDC). We expect these numbers to continue to increase as more testing is completed. Please check the Maine CDC web site routinely for updates (<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus.shtml>). This afternoon, President Trump declared a national emergency over coronavirus outbreak. This declaration expands executive, legislative and regulatory options in combating the situation.

Maine provider briefing with Senator Collins

This morning, MHCA participated in a provider briefing with Maine Senator Susan Collins. MHCA joined others, like the Maine Hospital Association and Maine Medical Association, to discuss provider preparedness in Maine and learn about federal efforts to assist States in dealing with this public health crisis. MHCA raised concern about visitation policies in long term care facilities, sharing that federal and state CDC guidance is not as strong as many providers would prefer in terms of overall limitations. We further discussed staffing challenges, employees' child care issues that could arise from school shutdowns, availability of PPE and prioritization of testing for the most at-risk population and overall funding support for unanticipated increased costs.

MHCA seeks clarification on visitation policy

At the time of this email, MHCA is still waiting for a response from DHHS Licensing and Certification regarding facility visitation policies and regulatory compliance. Specifically, we seek to resolve the tensions among social distancing, keeping the virus out of buildings, ensuring residents have access to essential visits, and respecting provider professional judgement. As soon as we hear back, we will follow up. In the meantime, we've heard from many members who are using their judgement to limit visits, with certain exceptions.

Maine LTCOP procedure

From the Maine Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, "We will continue to provide advocacy for residents in long-term care facilities closely following the guidance provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Centers for Disease Control. To the extent possible, we will address resident concerns through alternative methods including telephone calls with residents. If a facility visit is necessary, we expect that the facility would utilize the same screening criteria for our staff that is applied to any visitor. Additionally, we are limiting volunteer visits. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns."

MHCA staff and members hold work session

Today, MHCA staff, corporate leaders and clinicians from member facilities, the QIO and pharmacy representatives met at Continuum Healthcare to share experiences, best practices, challenges as COVID-19 unfolds in Maine. Specifically, the group worked on the development of a staff education toolkit and education program, and FAQ's, all of which will be made available to members early next week. MHCA thanks these professionals for lending their time and expertise to this work.

MHCA staff availability

With full appreciation of the fact that you operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, MHCA staff is also available to members, day or night, weekdays or weekends. We all receive email notification on our cell phones; for Rick Erb, rerb@mehta.org or 207-441-7138; for Nadine Grosso, ngrosso@mehta.org or 207-653-0064 or Danielle Watford, dwatford@mehta.org or 207-312-9391. MHCA leadership has also made this information available to appropriate state officials.

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

Sincerely,
Nadine L. Grosso
Vice President and Director of Communications
Ngrosso@mehta.org
207-623-1146