



Visit our COVID-19 Page Here

Dear Member,

The Maine CDC updates COVID-19 testing data once each day, Monday through Friday by 12 PM EDT. You may access the information here: [mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus](https://www.mecdc.org/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus) As of today, March 20, 2020 at 12:00 PM:

Total Confirmed Cases	44
Total Presumptive Positive Cases	12
Persons With Negative Tests	2264

#### DHHS issues NF Extraordinary Circumstance Allowance memo

Maine DHHS released instructions to nursing facilities this afternoon about how to seek reimbursement related to additional COVID-19 response expenses. The Extraordinary Circumstance Allowance memorandum is [attached](#) for your reference.

#### MHCA seeks temporary regulatory relief

In collaboration with the MHCA Board of Directors, MHCA submitted a list of proposed temporary relief measures for nursing homes and assisted living providers to the Governor's office and DHHS today. MHCA believes that these are necessary steps to ensure the safety and well-being of Maine's long term care residents during this crisis. There are similar efforts underway in other states and we remain committed to collaborating with our state government to implement temporary strategies to address the current challenges. We will update members on specific activity as soon as we can.

#### CDC shares facility assessment tool

MHCA strongly encourages facilities to review their current infection control programs specifically in light of the ever changing COVID19 guidance. To assist facilities and infection preventionists with this task, the federal Centers for Disease Control has created the [attached](#) infection prevention and control assessment tool, which should be used to assist nursing homes with preparing to care for residents with COVID-19. This assessment tool, which was shared today by the Maine CDC, will help facilities prioritize resources and assess care planning if you are caring for a resident with COVID-19.

#### AHCA Interim Guidance on SNFs Accepting Patients from Hospitals

AHCA is issuing [interim guidance](#) to help skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) make decisions about accepting hospital discharges to SNFs during COVID-19 pandemic. The decision-making and guidance will likely change as the prevalence of COVID-19 varies in communities and hospital surge increases in the community. This guidance is designed to help reduce the risk of admitting someone with COVID-19 into your building, along with the steps you should take to prevent any spread. *This is AHCA guidance, not CMS guidance.*

During a COVID-19 epidemic, the elderly will still have other medical problems that require hospitalization and post-acute care (e.g., strokes, CHF exacerbations, surgeries, etc.). The volume of some traditional post-acute admission is decreasing as hospitals are discontinuing most elective surgeries and elective admissions. However, hospitals expect to see a surge in admissions related to COVID-19, who will need post-acute care, especially as COVID-19 becomes more wide-spread in the surrounding community.

CMS has also waived the 3-day stay requirement for all discharges, regardless of COVID-19 status, to allow hospitals to more easily create new beds for the surge in COVID-19 admissions. As such, SNFs will face the challenge as to which hospital discharges, they can accept. The decision-making process will vary depending on if the SNF has COVID-19 positive residents already, the prevalence of COVID-19 in the surrounding community, and the hospital's capacity, as well as the ability of the SNF to manage residents who are COVID-19 positive or suspected to have COVID-19.

**AHCA/MHCA strongly urge SNFs to begin now creating separate wings, units or floors by moving current residents to handle admissions from the hospital and keep current resident separate, if possible.** It is likely state public health officials may issue state or regional specific guidance that supersedes this guidance.

### **Transfers from SNFs to the Hospital**

Reminder from AHCA and Maine CDC, a positive test for COVID-19 or a person with fever or respiratory symptoms does NOT need to be hospitalized. They should be put in contact precautions and follow [CDC guidance](#) for COVID-19 positive or presumptive cases in long term care. If a resident requires IV fluids, oxygen and other treatments due to their respiratory symptoms, Medicare will allow you to switch the person over to Medicare Part A without a 3-day SNF stay. Discussion with families and residents should occur about the risks of hospitalization with COVID-19 during this pandemic period.

### **Applicability of Paid-Leave Provisions in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act**

AHCA/NCAL asked its legal counsel, Reed Smith, to draft the [attached](#) memorandum that discusses the applicability of the paid-leave provisions in the recently enacted Families First Coronavirus Response Act. There will be more on this next week from in-state counsel. **MHCA is sending a separate email from legal counsel PretiFlaherty on this Act.**

### **CMS Delays Implementation of the October 1, 2020 MDS 3.0 v1.18.1 Release**

CMS announced today is delaying the Minimum Data Set (MDS) 3.0 v1.18.1 release, which had been scheduled for October 1, 2020, in response to stakeholder concerns, especially about the removal of Section G items from OBRA assessments. CMS staff are actively engaged in discussions with various stakeholders, regarding the various changes, the impacts of these changes, as well as, the compressed timeline to educate and train facility staff and update software and IT systems.

### **National Association of Health Care Assistants offers free COVID-19 education for staff**

The National Association of Health Care Assistants (NAHCA) is now offering free COVID-19 education for Certified Nursing Assistants and anyone else interested. NAHCA has created and released the first in a series of courses aimed specifically at providing CNA education on COVID-19. This content is aimed at helping those who work in senior care to protect themselves and those they serve. NAHCA's goal is to support CNAs and all healthcare professionals to provide compassionate and quality care in these difficult times. Please feel free to distribute this announcement. The course can be found at <https://www.nahcacna.org/covid-19-education/>

### **MHCA staff availability**

MHCA staff is available to members, day or night, weekdays or weekends. We all receive email notification on our cell phones; for Rick Erb, [rerb@mehca.org](mailto:rerb@mehca.org) or 207-441-7138; for Nadine Grosso, [ngrosso@mehca.org](mailto:ngrosso@mehca.org) or 207-653-0064 or Danielle Watford, [dwatford@mehca.org](mailto:dwatford@mehca.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.

Nadine L. Grosso  
Vice President and Director of Communications  
[ngrosso@mehca.org](mailto:ngrosso@mehca.org)