



Visit our COVID-19 Page Here

Dear Member,

***Update to yesterday's PPE notes on universal usage**

In yesterday's update, MHCA referenced CDC guidance for things facilities should do when there are positive COVID-19 cases in their outside community/town and/or in their facility. Recommendations outlined by the CDC included the universal use of PPE for the care of all residents, regardless of presence of symptoms (e.g. a mask when COVID is identified in the community and full PPE [gown, gloves, eye protection, facemask] when COVID is identified in the facility). **PLEASE NOTE: These are considerations when PPE supplies are optimal. That is not our current situation. As Rita Owsiak, Maine CDC HAI Coordinator highlighted on her call for LTC facilities yesterday we are at or soon will be at the point where Crisis/Alternate Strategies should be employed. Please refer to the [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of PPE](#) which highlights steps facilities can take to help prolong our PPE supplies.**

Maine CDC moves LTC up to Tier 1 for TESTING

Last night, Maine CDC moved patients living in congregate setting (e.g., long term care facilities, group homes, assisted living facilities, jails, shelters) from Tier 2 to Tier 1 for testing. Please see below from Maine CDC web site:

"To preserve Maine's specimen collection and testing supplies for patients who may develop severe COVID-19 illness over the coming months, effective immediately, Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) will prioritize testing to high-risk individuals and will only accept specimens for testing from symptomatic individuals who have fever or respiratory symptoms and who fall into one of the following high-risk categories:

Tier 1:

- Those who are hospitalized
- Health care workers
- First responders (e.g., EMS Police, Fire)
- **Patients living in congregate setting (e.g., LTCFs, group homes, assisted living facilities, jails, shelters)"**

NEW access link for weekly LTC calls with Maine CDC

Please note the following new link for the weekly 1 pm Wednesday call with Rita Owsiak, the Maine CDC Healthcare-Associated Infection Coordinator. This invitation may be forwarded to others as appropriate for this briefing.

Topic: Maine CDC Coronavirus Update for Long Term Care Facilities

Time: Mar 18, 2020 01:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Wednesday

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/529438381>

Meeting ID: 529 438 381

Governor Mills supports ECA and other measures to support ltc

In a press release today, Governor Janet Mills reiterated steps her Administration is taking to support long term care facilities. In addition to encouraging facilities to request supplemental reimbursement through the extraordinary circumstance allowance (for expenses starting March 1, 2020), the release also states:

"The Administration is also preparing to apply to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for regulatory relief and alternative ways to support and deliver residential and other services for DHHS citizens in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the Administration will swiftly implement federal funding for Maine people and providers newly available through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act signed into law last week, which includes support for Medicaid, paid sick leave, unemployment, food and nutrition programs, and testing for uninsured individuals, among other areas.

Senate Passes Stimulus Package

On March 25, the Senate passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (H.R. 748), which now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration. Of note to skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities, the stimulus includes:

- A temporary suspension of Medicare sequestration cut
- \$100 billion fund for eligible health care providers
- Deferral of 6.2% payroll tax
- \$200 million in funding to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus
- Childcare support for health care sector employees
- New loan program for certain employers
- Funding for housing for the elderly and disabled

We expect the House to pass this bill later this week, and once it passes, we will offer a more detailed summary of the various provisions specific to long term care.

Mental health resources during this time

Maine's **2-1-1** program is available to address mental health needs generally, and specific to COVID-19. Mainers may dial 2-1-1- on the phone or visit <https://211maine.org/>

Maine Crisis Hotline - 1-888-568-1112 (Voice) or 711 (Maine Relay)

The Maine Crisis Hotline helps to stabilize individuals and families while assisting in crisis resolution and action planning. If you are concerned about yourself or about somebody else, call the 24-hour crisis hotline and speak with a trained crisis clinician who can connect you to the closest crisis center.

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

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