



Visit our COVID-19 Page Here

Dear Member:

#### **CMS Announcement on NHSN Data and Guidance on COVID-19-Related Survey Activity**

Late yesterday, the federal government released data from skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) on the number of COVID-19 infections and deaths, and also unveiled new incentives and penalties for infection control adherence. Additionally, CMS released a memorandum ([QSO-20-31-ALL](#)) addressing NHSN data, COVID-19 survey activities, enhanced enforcement, and engagement of Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs).

Since March 6, 2020, state survey agencies have been performing focused Infection Control surveys of nursing homes. CMS is now initiating a performance-based funding requirement tied to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which will provide supplemental grants for state survey agencies that complete 100% of their focused infection control nursing home surveys by July 31, 2020. For those states that do not, penalties will be assessed on the state agency. The CMS memo provides further guidance for the limited resumption of routine survey activities. CMS is also enhancing the facility penalties for noncompliance with infection control and refocusing the work of the Quality Improvement Organizations to assist nursing homes in combating COVID-19. This guidance is effective immediately and will cease to be in effect when the Secretary determines there is no longer a Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19.

AHCA/NCAL released a statement from Mark Parkinson, president and CEO, in response to CMS activities. It says, in part,

“Today’s report validates the need for the assistance that nursing homes have been calling for since the beginning of this pandemic. Especially as we continue to expand testing for residents and staff in long term care centers in June, we should anticipate the number of cases to rise as asymptomatic residents and staff will be identified.

“Regarding CMS imposing additional enforcement and fines, what would really be helpful to improve the situation is for CMS and their survey teams to work together with the nursing home industry to fight this COVID-19 battle. This situation will get worse if surveyors are only looking for reasons to find deficiencies and issue fines instead of identifying ways for nursing homes to make real changes and help them improve their infection control programs. It’s time to recognize that when nursing homes receive

citations, it's a failure not just of the provider, but of CMS and the survey process as well."

### **Grainger Recovery Kits, a PPE Opportunity through MHCABS GPO Partner**

Provista/Vizient has announced the following opportunity from Grainger: Grainger has products to help you adjust to this "New Normal." Their Back to Work Kits contain a variety of products to help you address your workplace and visitor safety needs in accordance with guidance from the CDC. **Members are to contact their local Grainger Account Manager and provide them the brand name, part name, description information, in the additional information below:**

#### **Back to Work Kits ([see flyer](#))**

- Large Kits - #56LN48 (45 Kits/PK) – **WEB PRICE: \$1,241.60 per PK**
- Small Kits - #56LN49 (60 Kits/PK) – **WEB PRICE: \$755.20 per PK**

#### **Hanes Washable Face Masks**

- SKU: [348ER6](#)
- Short Description: Face Mask, Ear Loop, Cotton, Universal Mask Size, White
- UOM: Pack of 5
- Price: \$12.96

#### **3 Ply Disposable Face Masks**

- Grainger #56JD44
- Grainger #56HW38
- Cost is \$32 per box of 50

*Reminder that this is not a guarantee of product. Product are available on a first come, first serve basis. Members are subject to product availability by the supplier.*

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Dianne Chicoine, Director of Business & Information Services Email: [dchicoine@mehca.org](mailto:dchicoine@mehca.org).

### **One Size Doesn't Fit All When it Comes to Guidelines**

As has been the case throughout this pandemic, one size doesn't fit all when it comes to guidelines. For example, this weekend, the federal CDC updated its guidance for visitation in assisted living communities for those states who are further along in their reopening phases. The *Considerations for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Assisted Living Facilities* (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/assisted-living.html>) were referenced today on a Maine CDC call, but for Maine, in-house visitor restrictions continue to hold for both assisted living facilities and nursing homes. This is especially important to keep in mind as Governor Mills' plan to re-open the state of Maine continues to move forward. We also know that with the changes to the state reopening plan, residents, like those in assisted housing settings will want to leave their homes. It is still important to minimize the risk of spread. AHCA has created member support documents to aid facilities with messaging when [residents wish to go out into the community](#).

The CDC has created the document "[Supporting Your Loved One in a Long-Term Care Facility](#)" which outlines strategies to help families and residents stay connected during this continued visitor restriction. AHCA/NCAL has prepared another resource to help providers continue to keep residents connected to their loved ones. These resources are a starting point and intended to kick off additional ideas for each center or community based on the status of COVID-19 in their building and surrounding community, as well as the availability of necessary resources to support these efforts.

### **AHCA to launch major advocacy campaign**

The American Health Care Association Council of States, voted unanimously today to approve a measure that will fund a major advertising campaign that will continue efforts to advocate for federal COVID-19 support to long term care facilities.

To fund this initiative, the Council of States approved a special assessment of \$10 per nursing facility bed in each state. Additional funds will be taken from AHCA reserves and raised through individual vendors and partners. The \$10 per bed fee will be in place for two years, although it may be subject to reevaluation after year-one.

AHCA advocacy has yielded significant benefits through congressional action, including

over \$7 billion in direct funding to nursing homes. Most recently, nursing facilities received relief in the form of payments of \$50,000 per facility, plus an allocation of \$2,500 per bed. With this strong return on investment in mind, the Maine Health Care Association Board of Directors voted unanimously to support the AHCA proposal.

Another important aspect of the national campaign will be to work to restore public confidence in our long term care system in the wake of COVID-19.

There is still \$97 billion in unallocated federal funds dedicated to COVID-19 and the strong possibility of more funds in a second stimulus package. AHCA will also be fighting for federal immunity language that will protect long term care facilities from lawsuits during the unique circumstances we face from COVID-19.

Obtaining federal support for assisted living has been a frustrating experience for AHCA/NCAL, but it is hoped that this campaign will lead to success on that front. Noting the lack of funding to date, the proposal does not include any assessment on assisted living or ICF beds.

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)