



[Visit our COVID-19 Page Here](#)

Dear Member:

Creating Connections: E-Notes for Long Term Care

MHCA has renamed and revamped the Notes for Maine Seniors program to better align with the current COVID-19 experience. It was originally designed to encourage messages between residents and children who were out of school, but we know that many children are attending school virtually now.

Knowing that our nursing home and assisted living residents have been unable to have visitors due to CDC guidelines since mid-March, this initiative, **Creating Connections: E-Notes for Long Term Care**, encourages community members of all ages to write notes of encouragement, share a funny joke, upload a drawing, or a photo. We know this is a difficult and lonely time for residents and this is a way to spread some happiness while keeping residents safe.

Please share this link widely <https://www.mehca.org/e-notes4ltc>. MHCA will compile these messages for your activity professionals to share with residents across the state.

Maine COVID-19 By the Numbers as of April 29, 2020

- 1056 COVID positive cases
- 22-25% are nursing home/assisted living
- 166 hospitalizations
- 247 COVID positive healthcare workers across all settings
- 52 COVID related deaths
- 56% of deaths have occurred in nursing homes
- 5 nursing homes/1 assisted living with outbreaks

Notes from today’s Maine CDC call for LTC facilities:

On March 20th, the [CDC released updated COVID-19 screening](#) symptoms to include:

One of the following: cough or shortness of breath/difficulty breathing

OR at least two of the following: fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills or muscle pain

On today’s ME CDC call with Rita Owsiak, HAI Coordinator it was recommended that facilities should update their screening tool to express these new symptoms. In addition, Rita did state that she knows of facilities using the current [AMDA screening](#) guidance

which is also acceptable.

The use of kN95 masks: kN95s are the Chinese standard for a NIOSH approved equivalent respirator. These are CDC approved alternatives; however, be cautious of counterfeit masks. The Maine CDC has been the victim of equipment that may not be as good as they claim. In addition, the recommendations for extended N95s by NIOSH says 5 doffings (5 individual uses). CDC has estimated that would be one shift. The 5 day rotation strategy was developed through a private study and presented at an IP conference in March. Many are using this strategy. CDC has not weighed in on the validity of this strategy. Please keep in mind, the longer you use the mask the greater chance for contamination.

Extended use PPE strategies: How long can we wear the same mask? Current CDC recommendations is one shift (CDC does not identify the number of hours). If the mask gets soiled or difficult to breathe through it should be discarded.

If you need fit testing: contact your county EMA to get your facility on the schedule for fit testing.

Meals for residents in facilities with outbreaks: Some are using paper products but there is no evidence that this is necessary. We should keep resident quality of life in mind. If facilities are concerned with the trays from isolation rooms, you could bag the trays but this is more for staff comfort and not a necessary infection control measure.

Maine Medical Directors Association (MeMDA) requests survey response

MeMDA has requested information on testing strategies and common practices to be able to best synthesize the common Maine approaches and ask that your facility infection preventionist or other designated individual complete this short 3 minute survey by Friday May 1, 2020. We thank you if you have already responded. You can access this survey by clicking the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BY73ZWX>

FEMA Shipping SNFs a Supply of PPE in Early May and Again in June

The White House Coronavirus Task Force recently announced that FEMA will be shipping to every nursing home in the United States a supply of PPE (surgical masks, gowns, face shields and gloves) in early May and again in early June. As we learn more about the arrival dates and amounts, we will let you know.

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

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