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**Dear Member:**

### **Comment Deadline Approaching: Immunization Requirements for Healthcare Workers**

On September 30, 2020, the Maine CDC proposed rule changes to amend its rule specific to immunization requirements for healthcare workers. Specifically, the rule proposes to make the seasonal influenza vaccine part of the immunizations required for health care workers, to protect public health during the COVID-19 pandemic and further reduce the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases. There is still time for members to participate in the following [quick survey](#) to help guide MHCA in the development of our comments.

In accordance with 5 MRS sec. 8052 sub-sec 1, as requested by 5 persons, the agency will hold a public hearing on its proposed rule changes for 10-144 CMR, chapter 264 – Immunization Requirements for Healthcare Workers. For more information, you can access the complete proposed rule and related rulemaking documents by going to the Maine CDC Rules webpage at <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/rules/maine-cdc-rules.shtml>.

### **Facilities Have Two Weeks to Register Vaccination Preferences in National Distribution Program for LTC Residents**

Under the newly announced Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program, beginning on October 19<sup>th</sup>, long term care facilities (nursing homes, assisted living communities, ICF/IIDs and other congregate settings for older adults) will have two weeks to register with the CDC on how they want to receive and administer the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

- **Nursing Homes** should register through NHSN: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/index.html>
- **Assisted Living Facilities and other** congregate settings (ICF/IIDs, independent living, etc.) should register through RedCap at <https://airc.cdc.gov/surveys/?s=R3TYTJDAW4>
- **Multi-Level Facilities** should sign up for your SNF via NHSN and the remaining levels of care through the REDCap portal. SNF's must sign up through the NHSN portal.

### **Maine Proposed Regulations Governing the Licensing and Functioning of Assisted Housing Programs**

This major substantive [rulemaking](#) institutes measures to improve and clarify infection surveillance, control, mitigation, and crisis staffing planning in Maine's assisted housing facilities, including assisted living, residential care facilities, and private non-medical institutions. This rulemaking revises 10-144 CMR Ch. 113, Regulations Governing the Licensing and Functioning of Assisted Housing Programs, which is published in nine parts, by adding a new part. The provisions related to Infection Prevention and Control will apply to all types of Assisted Housing Programs subject to licensure under 22 MRS 7801. These provisions are consistent with State and Federal Center for Disease Control guidance, in

response to the increased spread of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and will help to mitigate any future outbreaks of novel contagious illnesses.

In compliance with 22 M.R.S. 7853(1), the Department developed this rule in consultation with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP). On June 25, 2020, the Department submitted draft rules to Brenda Gallant, Executive Director of the LTCOP, for her review and input. Department staff and LTCOP Executive Director Gallant and staff discussed the rulemaking on or about June 26, 2020, at which time Executive Director Gallant expressed no concerns regarding the draft rule.

The Department, through OADS, has requested federal CARES Act Covid Relief Funding (CRF) to hire an infection control consultant, who will work with facilities to help them develop an Infection Control and Prevention plan, which will be required by this rule. The Department received approval for the Covid Relief Funding at the end of September, 2020. The Department anticipates that the facilities plan development/infection control consultation costs will be defrayed through the CRF. The rule provides a requirement for PPE and supplies, but these measures should have been in place in the facilities in response to the Covid pandemic.

This is a major substantive rulemaking, and this new rule will be provisionally adopted following public comment and review by the Office of the Attorney General. The provisionally adopted rule will not become effective until after Legislative review and approval.

[Submit Comments](#) (Opens in new window) - Comment Deadline: 11/22/20 | Posted: October 21, 2020

#### **FDA releases Guidance on Self-Swabbing Technique**

The FDA has issued updated guidance on the self-swabbing technique which is different than the technique approved by the Maine CDC pilot. This info was forwarded by Dr. Siri Bennet of the Maine CDC to the Maine State Board of Licensure for Nursing on 10/20/20. Please see the link below for details: [recommendations-providing-clear-instructions-patients-who-self-collect-anterior-nares-nasal-sample](#)

#### **ICYMI: Safe Reunions (Family Visitation) Webinar Recording Now Available**

Maine LTCOP recently hosted a Safe Reunions Webinar to provide education around the updated guidance on visitation for families with loved ones in long-term care facilities. This webinar featured Dr. Stephen Sears, Epidemiologist & Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Clinical Advisor -- COVID-19 Response Team and William Montejo, Director, Division of Licensing and Certification, Department of Health and Human Services, and was moderated by MHCA staff. That recording is now available here: <https://youtu.be/MyMolhiVnNM>. The presentation slides are also [attached](#).

#### **Updated PPE Suppliers**

In response to growing concerns about PPE availability over the next few months, our national affiliate, AHCA/NCAL, has compiled a list of [PPE suppliers](#) it has vetted. We have indicated those suppliers who are part of MHCA's group purchasing program, as well as included additional vendor PPE contracts from our national group purchasing partner Provista/Vizient. For more information about our [group purchasing program](#), or if you need your Provista/Vizient member ID (MID), please contact Dianne Chicoine, Director of Business & Information Services Email: [dchicoine@mehca.org](mailto:dchicoine@mehca.org) Tel: 207.623.1146, ext. 201.

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

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