



Visit our COVID-19 Page Here



Innovation Corner: Safe Family and Medical Visitation on the Porch

The Lincoln Home's porch in Newcastle has been transformed to serve as a safe place for family visitation and, more recently, a place to keep those important appointments with the podiatrist. According to Lynn Norgang, RN, Executive Director, she asked the home's maintenance director if he could divide the screened porch in half with plexi glass. She says, "He had it done in three days and it is beautiful. Now family may enter their part of the porch from the outside and residents enter from the inside."

Next, they asked the maintenance director if he could put a door in the bottom so residents could stick their feet through for the podiatrist. Says Norgang, "He had it done the next week. So today, the residents are de lighted to be having their feet done our podiatrist always sits on the floor so this has be complete home run!"

MHCA is pleased to highlight the creativity and commitment of its members during this pandemic. If you have an idea or program to share, please email ngrosso@mehca.org.

Join Us Tomorrow for Frontline Warmline Presentation

MHCA would like to invite you to a presentation by the Maine Frontline Warmline tomorrow, June 26, 2020 from 1-2:30pm.

Our special guests will be:

- Dr. Ed Pontius, Founding Medical Director of Maine Frontline Warmline
- Dianna Poulin, Maine Medical Association
- Susie Peixotto, Tri County Mental Health

During this zoom broadcast they will be providing a presentation on what the Maine Frontline Warmline is doing in support of front line caregivers and they are interested in hearing how they might support LTC staff in Maine. Please find the log in information below:

Friday June 26, 2020; 1:00-2:30pm
<https://healthcentricadvisors.zoom.us/j/2475894331>
Meeting ID: 247 589 4331
Join by phone
Dial In: 888-895-6448
Conf. Code: 1432302

Residents who go out for appointments: Do we quarantine?

During yesterday's call for LTC providers with Rita Owsiak from Maine CDC there was discussion regarding the need to quarantine following an essential out of facility medical appointment. Guidance was provided based on the [CDC](#) recommendation that facilities

should create a plan for managing New Admissions and Readmissions Whose COVID-19 Status is Unknown. Specifically, Rita identified the guidelines that:

- Depending on the prevalence of COVID-19 in the community, this might include placing the resident in a single-person room or in a separate observation area so the resident can be monitored for evidence of COVID-19. HCP should wear an N95 or higher-level respirator (or facemask if a respirator is not available), eye protection (i.e., goggles or a disposable face shield that covers the front and sides of the face), gloves, and gown when caring for these residents. Residents can be transferred out of the observation area to the main facility if they remain afebrile and without symptoms for 14 days after their admission. Testing at the end of this period can be considered to increase certainty that the resident is not infected.

According to recent guidance a resident leaving for a medically essential appointment and returning is not a readmission. Based on some confusion from that discussion, Rita Owsiak has conducted a search of federal CDC guidance regarding the topic of a resident leaving the facility for a medically essential appointment and found the following guidance that facilities should [Implement Source Control Measures](#).

- Residents should wear a cloth face covering or facemask (if tolerated) whenever they leave their room, including for procedures outside the facility.

Rita apologized for any confusion and thanked providers for the opportunity to re-exam this guidance. MHCA recognizes that the speed at which federal guidance is evolving has made it all but impossible to keep up with and we value the work that Rita and all Maine CDC staff have done to help our facilities during this public health crisis.

New ABN, Form CMS-R-131 Released

The [Advance Beneficiary Notice of Noncoverage \(ABN\), Form CMS-R-131](#), is issued by providers (including independent laboratories, home health agencies, and hospices), physicians, practitioners, and suppliers to Original Medicare (fee for service - FFS) beneficiaries in situations where Medicare payment is expected to be denied. The ABN is issued in order to transfer potential financial liability to the Medicare beneficiary in certain instances. Guidelines for issuing the ABN can be found beginning in Section 50 in the Medicare Claims Processing Manual, 100-4, Chapter 30 (PDF). The newest version of the ABN, Form CMS-R-131, and [form instructions](#) have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and should be used by providers beginning on 8/31/2020 with the expiration date of 06/30/2023.

CMS Releases FAQ on Visitation

On Wednesday 6/24/2020, CMS released guidance on how facilities may be able to support controlled visitation before a geographic area actually gets to phase three of the national reopening protocols. Many of the protocols mentioned in the [four-page FAQ document](#) involve expected pandemic practices such as the wearing of face coverings and social distancing during visits. In-person meetings should be allowed in outside areas or well-designed indoor spaces, and involve individuals not displaying any COVID-19 symptoms. Much of this CMS FAQ aligns with the previously released [Maine CDC guidance on outdoor visitation date 6/10/2020](#). As facilities review each document and establish policies and procedures for outdoor visitation between residents and their loved ones MHCA strongly encourages facilities to review both documents in order to ensure that your practices are supported by the CDC guidance and the CMS protocols.

ICYMI: Beginning this week, the *MHCA COVID-19 Briefing* will be distributed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. While our "open rates" (40+%) have consistently exceeded industry standards (19%), we are making this change as COVID-19 related communication has become less urgent to share on a daily basis and out of consideration for the high volume of email that our members receive in general. If there is an item of high priority that can't wait for a Tues/Thursday cycle, we will be sure to let members know. We will evaluate this new schedule and make adjustments as necessary to meet members' needs.

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

Nadine L. Grosso
Vice President and Director of Communications

