



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

Dear Member:

### **MHCA planning to go “Virtual” with the Fall Conference!**

Given the significant challenges the COVID-19 public health crisis has presented for care communities across Maine, MHCA has decided not to meet in-person for our annual *Fall Health Care Conference & Expo* this year. Several things factored into this decision, new mandates for the size of gatherings, physical distancing requirements, new cleaning protocols, new guidelines for food service, travel bans and, most importantly, the uncertainty of where we'll be with this virus in the coming months.

We are considering options for offering a “virtual” trade show/conference in October. We know that going virtual is a huge change but we still feel it is important to offer opportunities for you to share experiences and knowledge with each other. More information will be forthcoming on that in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your understanding as we navigate this public health crisis together. Ensuring the health and well-being of your residents, and any individuals coming in/out of your care community, remains our top priority. We salute you for the incredible work you do on a daily basis to protect and serve our most vulnerable citizens.

### **OADS COVID-19 Congregate Housing Stakeholder Call**

Today during the OADS stakeholder call, the new CDC guidance for outdoor visitation was reviewed. Member providers raised questions regarding the ability to screen and monitor visits, whether it was permissible to use cloth face coverings for families and residents when visiting and whether there was any leniency regarding the screening tool used for such visits.

In addition, Bill Montejó from the Maine Division of Licensing provided updates on infection control focused surveys for nursing homes specifically responding to questions regarding whether these surveys would be implemented for assisted housing facilities as well. His comments suggested that the infection control surveys that are occurring in nursing homes are federally mandated at this time; however, he and his team are looking at the need for similar surveys in assisted housing communities as well. He strongly encouraged facilities to look at their infection control and prevention plans and review policies and procedures that are related to COVID 19.

MHCA has many resources located on its COVID 19 dedicated web page to help our assisted housing members with implementation and review of such plans. In addition, OADS held an online zoom survey asking if participants of today's call would be interested in IP education or technical support-almost 70% responded YES to both. MHCA is working on an assisted housing specific infection control education program which is tentatively scheduled for the last two weeks in August. More information to come.

### **NHSN Reporting Tips from Healthcentric Advisors**

As you know, CMS is requiring all Medicare certified nursing facilities to submit COVID-19 data via NHSN COVID-19. CMS recently posted these data on NH Compare and began

issuing citations. **Please monitor CASPER/QIES for warning and/or citation letters as this appears to be the current method of communication.** See [CMS-Issuing-F884-Citation,-CMPs-for-Failure-to-Report-COVID-19-Data](#) for more information.

Below are some tips that the CDC shared earlier this week to help facilities avoid being flagged on exception reports, which are run every Monday morning for the previous week's reporting (Mon-Sun).

**Avoid showing as not reporting:**

- Check your CCN, CCN Effective Data, and Facility Type (<https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/pdfs/covid19/lctf/change-lctf-508.pdf>)
- Report at least once a week; same day/time and before the end of the reporting period - closes Sun 11:59pm
- Confirm all 4 pathways are marked complete (dark green) for all reporting days

**Make sure your data is accurate:**

- Be sure to enter new counts since last report (*don't over count*)
- Do not remove /update previous entries to reflect change in status (*e.g., suspected to positive*)
- Do not leave fields blank - if none, enter "0"
- On the vent module, select "No" if you do not have any ventilator dependent unit(s) and/or beds (*if yes, make sure you add the count*)

If you're all set with regular reporting, take a few moments to set yourself up for future success:

- Bookmark the page (*not the tool*) for NHSN: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/lctf/covid19/index.html>
- Identify a second NHSN User and if you haven't already, identify your [NHSN users](#)
- Always double check your entries - select "Export CSV" under the Calendar to pull and view your data entry, correct any issues prior to 11:59pm on Sunday
- Let us help you... join the state's DPH and QIO group so we can access your data in real time and provide appropriate support (*see attached for details and instructions*)

Not sure where to begin or just want to walk through a process, ***please reach out*** to Danielle Hersey at [dhersey@healthcentricadvisors.org](mailto:dhersey@healthcentricadvisors.org).

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

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