



## **Memorandum of Cooperation**

### ***Best Practices for Safe and Appropriate Access to Assisted Housing Residents for Authorized Home Care, Home Health and Hospice Care Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic***

#### **Purpose of Memorandum of Cooperation**

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Sharing a mutual goal to comply with State and Federal mandates aimed at protecting residents from COVID-19, the Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine and the Maine Health Care Association, in partnership with The Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program are committed to working together to ensure consistent and safe access to assisted housing residents for the delivery of home care, home health and hospice services specified in the residents' plans of care.

This document aligns with the guidance provided by Maine's Division of Licensing and Certification: "hospice staff and home health agency staff providing care for residents in assisted housing facilities are considered essential staff and may not be barred or prohibited from entering licensed facilities."

#### **Strategies to Reduce Risk/Increase Safe Access**

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It is imperative that essential care be delivered safely and effectively for the health and well-being of all residents living in a congregate care setting. Due to the heightened risk for illness and death that COVID-19 presents to those with compromised health, we offer the following considerations for facilities; as well as home care, home health and hospice providers (provider) for enhanced safety during this pandemic:

- ✓ Adhere to current CDC guidelines for visitor screening to include screening provider staff and not allow admission if symptoms are present.
- ✓ Monitor and assess resident care plans to ensure compliance.
- ✓ Consider providing reasonable alternatives to direct person-to-person care from provider, such as utilizing technology, conducting nursing assessments to determine if care a resident might receive from an outside service is within the scope of existing facility staff.
- ✓ Follow current CDC guidelines to minimize "staff sharing" in congregate care settings, request that provider assign dedicated staff to the assisted housing community and/or agree upon schedule options that meet the needs of the resident, facility and provider.
- ✓ Observe current CDC guidelines with regard to appropriate PPE when delivering care. Provider staff may accommodate reasonable additional facility safety requests. These determinations should be made jointly ahead of scheduled visit between facility and provider.
- ✓ Limit provider staff movement to resident's room or consider reasonable accommodations in facility areas that permit care with limited exposure to other facility residents.
- ✓ Engage and consider the resident and their family member and/or designated authority for input, as appropriate, into the process of providing home care, home health or hospice care.
- ✓ Communicate clearly and timely with all parties involved.

## Conflict Resolution

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If direct person-to-person care is not able to be delivered, the provider will discuss other options, such as telehealth, with facility administrator or clinical director. If a suitable agreement can't be reached on a specific case, the facility or provider may engage the Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCOP) for arbitration. The provider may consider submitting a report directly to the Division of Licensing and Certification (DLC) if resolution isn't timely or satisfactory.

Similarly, if either party observes unsafe practices related to infection control and prevention, they should address issue with supervisor/administrator/clinical leads. If safety concerns persist, the LTCOP or the DLC should be contacted by facility or provider for resolution.

## Points of Contact

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