Checklist of Best Practices to Keep COVID-19 Out of Nursing Homes

This checklist supplements healthcare agency (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, etc.) guidelines to keep residents, staff and visitors safe in nursing homes.

Follow CDC/CMS Guidelines for Visitation

☐ Create and follow a written visitation plan based on CMS visitation guidance.
☐ Display culturally appropriate visitation signage at the facility's entrance explaining the guidance for visitation, including source control, based on CMS guidelines for COVID-19.
☐ Date all posted signage.
☐ Laminate signage for easier cleaning.
☐ Put hand hygiene products in convenient places throughout the facility, including entrances.
☐ Consistently screen staff and visitors at entrances.
☐ Give unmasked visitors a surgical or cloth mask.

Follow CDC/CMS Guidelines for Resident Placement & Transfers

☐ Maintain a written cohorting plan for new admissions and for residents who have tested positive for COVID-19, who are suspected to have COVID-19, or who have been in close contact with someone that has COVID-19.
☐ Maintain a written staffing plan for the COVID-19 care unit and update the plan as needed. As a best practice, nursing home staff assigned to the COVID-19 care unit should not work on any other units during the same shift.
☐ Document and communicate residents suspected and confirmed COVID-19 and vaccination status when transferring or discharging from the nursing home to another healthcare provider.

Follow CDC/CMS Guidelines for COVID-19 Screening & Testing

☐ Test residents according to CMS guidelines.
☐ Test staff according to CMS guidelines.
☐ Document testing completion and the results of each resident and staff test.
☐ Keep screening records.
☐ Schedule and perform testing and screening quality assurance checks routinely.

Communicate Infections & Outbreaks

☐ Communicate information about infections and outbreaks according to CMS guidelines.
☐ Share information about infections and outbreaks to residents and their family members or caregivers through routine phone calls, routine emails, and information posted on the facility website where applicable.
☐ Display culturally appropriate signage about outbreak status at the facility's entrance.

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☐ Date all posted signage.

☐ Communicate information about infections and outbreaks to staff through routine blast text messages, routine emails, shift reports, huddles, and/or communication boards.

☐ Notify the Department of Health about each COVID-19 positive result as applicable.

☐ Document resident and staff COVID-19 positive cases timely in the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).

☐ Limit communication about a resident's COVID-19 status only to those staff with a need to know in order to perform their assignment. Communication about the nursing home's infections or outbreak status to residents and family members should not include names or other identifiers.

Educate Staff & Residents About the Signs & Symptoms of COVID-19 & Other Infections

☐ Include culturally appropriate COVID-19 information in admission packets.

☐ Educate new and existing residents and their families on COVID-19 and document education provided.

☐ Provide culturally appropriate COVID-19 training to staff and document completion.

☐ Provide culturally appropriate COVID-19 training to all new hires and document completion.
- Documented training includes, but is not limited to:
  - ✓ Hand hygiene
  - ✓ Personal protective equipment (i.e., PPE donning and doffing, seal checks for respirators)

Stay Current with COVID-19 Treatment, Vaccine Requirements & Vaccine Access

☐ Maintain a written plan and a process for vaccinating all eligible staff and residents.

☐ Include additional doses and boosters in vaccination plan.

☐ Maintain a written plan for vaccine access and administration (i.e., clinics, local pharmacies, health department, etc.).

☐ Maintain a written plan and a process for vaccination exemptions.

☐ Maintain a written plan for access to available outpatient treatments for COVID-19.

☐ Educate staff and residents about the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine as well as potential adverse, effects in a culturally appropriate way.

☐ Document COVID-19 vaccine education provided to staff and residents

☐ Document COVID-19 booster vaccine education provided to staff and residents.

☐ Use and maintain appropriate tracking tools for vaccine administration, vaccination status, and exemptions, and temporary deferrals.

☐ Use and maintain appropriate vaccine administration form, including vaccine cards.

☐ Update residents and staff about COVID-19 prevention and medical treatment options.

☐ Educate staff and residents about additional doses and vaccine boosters.

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Educate Staff & Residents About How to Maintain and Use Personal Protective Equipment for COVID-19

- ☐ Regularly inventory PPE and maintain documentation of supplies.
- ☐ Maintain a Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Respiratory Protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134) and complete respirator fit testing for all staff, documenting completion (conducted annually, upon hire, and as needed for staff member physical changes or respirator manufacturer brand substitution).
- ☐ Educate staff and residents on how to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) correctly including when and where PPE is required.
- ☐ Educate staff about the appropriate sequence for donning and doffing of PPE
- ☐ Perform routine competency evaluations of PPE donning/doffing.

Cleaning & Disinfection

- ☐ Maintain and follow a written cleaning plan that includes a contingency plan for staff or supply shortages.
- ☐ Maintain and follow a written plan for routine cleaning and terminal cleaning of resident rooms, break rooms, clinical and non-clinical areas, and common areas.
- ☐ Maintain and follow a written plan for disinfection of any reusable PPE.
- ☐ Maintain and follow written procedures for cleaning and disinfection.
- ☐ Use cleaning products that are registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be effective against COVID-19.
- ☐ Communicate staff expectations for routine cleaning for each shift or assignment.
- ☐ Be sure that designated staff member(s) clean visitation areas immediately after use.

Additional Resources

General
- CMS Memo: QSO-20-39-NH REVISED
- CMS Memo: QSO-20-38-NH REVISED
- Visitation FAQ (cms.gov)
- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes
- PPE Burn Rate Calculator

Follow CDC/CMS Guidelines for Resident Placement & Transfers
- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes

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Follow CDC/CMS Guidelines for Screening & Testing

- [CMS Memo: QSO-20-38-NH REVISED]
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes | CDC] (see Testing)
- [CDC COVID Data Tracker] (Community Level of Transmission)

Communicate Infections & Outbreaks

- [CMS Memo: QSO-20-29-NH]

Educate Staff About the Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19 & Other Infections

- [Symptoms of COVID-19 | CDC]
- [CMS Training and Resources]

Stay Current with COVID-19 Treatment, Vaccine Requirements & Vaccine Access

- [Federal Register: Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination]
- [CMS Memo: QSO-21-19-NH]
- [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine]
- [Vaccine Access in Long Term Care Settings]
- [Staff Vaccine Administration Record for COVID-19]
- [Resident Vaccine Administration Record for COVID-19]

Educate Staff & Residents About How to Use Personal Protective Equipment for COVID-19

- [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine]
- [How to Protect Yourself & Others]
- [Respiratory Protection Guidance for the Employers of Those Working in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, and Other Long-Term Care Facilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic]

Cleaning & Disinfecting

- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility]
- [Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning in Healthcare Facilities]