



# Assessment of Long-Term Care Facility Guidance

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The Department of Health has provided the following clarification regarding long term care facilities.

The Department of Health is working with the County Health Departments and Emergency Medical Service providers to visit long- term care facilities. During these visits the following guidance will be used.

CDC recommendations are intended to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in long term care facilities. Each facility should consider the needs of their residents and implement measures designed to minimize the risk of spread of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html>). Task forces including Emergency Medical Services staff are available as a resource to assist facilities with ensuring best practices are in place to keep residents and staff safe during the current pandemic.

In a facility without any COVID-19 cases and without any patients under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19, residents and staff should practice social distancing including separating by more than 6 feet, avoiding communal dining, and avoiding groups larger than 10 people. All non-residents, staff included, should be screened prior to entry and wear a facemask whenever inside a building where residents are present. Staff who fail screening or develop symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection during their shift, should leave the facility and isolate themselves while arranging further follow up care.

Patient transport staff wishing to enter the facility should wear a facemask whenever entering the facility and should be screened prior to entry for all non-emergency calls. Whenever possible, handoff of patients in a covered, well ventilated outdoor area is encouraged to reduce the need for transport service personnel to enter the facility.

If a resident exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, respiratory illness, sore throat, or diarrhea, then they should be isolated from other residents such as by remaining in their room with the door closed, and the local Department of Health should be contacted for further guidance. Staff providing services to the resident should be in full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including gloves, gown, facemask and face shield.

If a COVID-19 patient or a PUI has been identified, facilities should assume there may be others that have been exposed and increase monitoring and social distancing for both residents and staff. Residents leaving their rooms should wear a facemask, if available and if tolerated. Staff should wear a surgical mask whenever working in a building where residents are present. Any residents developing symptoms should be immediately isolated as noted above. Staff developing symptoms should immediately cease all interactions with residents and other staff and isolate themselves.

## **Access control for all staff and visitors which includes a symptoms and temperature check?**

Introduction of COVID-19 is likely to occur from staff and visitors entering the facility. Entrance to long-term care facilities should be limited and staff and visitors screened in accordance with Division of Emergency Management Emergency Order 20-006. Screening should occur whenever entrance to a facility is necessary by staff or visitors. Screening should ideally include temperature and questions regarding symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, diarrhea etc.) Anyone failing the screening should not enter the facility. Emergency access for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responding to life threatening conditions inside the facility will by necessity mean screening cannot be performed in that circumstance. However, EMS

should still wear a facemask and limit those entering the facility to the minimum crew necessary to respond to the emergency.

**Were all staff that you saw wearing facemasks properly?**

All non-resident persons, including staff and EMS, who are present inside a building where residents are present, should be wearing a facemask to mitigate the potential for introduction of COVID-19 into the facility and spread to residents and staff.

**Did you see dispensers for alcohol-based hand rubs in the common areas?**

COVID-19 may survive, for hours, on inanimate objects and high touch surfaces such as doorknobs and handrails, etc. Regular hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol-based gel of 60 -70% alcohol is recommended to reduce the spread of COVID-19 via touch. Access to hand rub dispensers in areas of resident risk, such as a memory care unit, may be limited to protect residents.

**Have they stopped communal activities/group dining? Walk through the dining area and common areas.**

Social distancing is a proven and critically important strategy to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19. Dining arrangements should ensure that all persons remain separated by a minimum of 6 feet. This includes while in line to get food or sitting at a table while eating. Activities including group exercise is permissible provided groups are less than 10 persons and each participant is separated on all sides by at least 6 feet.

**Are all symptomatic and/or COVID-19 positive residents in their rooms with their door closed?**

Isolation of patients with COVID-19 is critical to reduce risk of spread to other residents and staff until recovery has occurred and the patient is felt to no longer be contagious. Follow up with local DOH is encouraged.

**Does the staff report that all the residents have at least one mask?**

In facilities with known COVID-19 positive cases, the use of facemasks by all people when in common areas can reduce the risk of spread from staff and residents who may have COVID-19 but who have relatively minor symptoms that may have gone unrecognized. Facemasks do not reduce the need to also maintain the 6 feet of social distancing noted above.

**Are signs present telling residents to remain in their room?**

All COVID-19 positive patients and those with suspected but not yet proven COVID-19 should be isolated from all other residents such as by staying in their room with the door closed. Staff entering the room must wear PPE to avoid exposure, and then must take care to wash hands and change gloves and gown before interacting with anyone else.

**In Counties where there is community spread**

In facilities located where there is known COVID-19 community spread the county health departments may direct additional isolation measures.

At this time Broward county is requiring residents be isolated in their rooms with the door closed. If residents come out of their rooms for any reason, they should be wearing a mask if available. All activities and dining in common areas are suspended. This is to be in addition to all other infection control procedures that have been communicated through AHCA, FDOH, CDC and CMS.