

Facility Outbreak Response Plan – Updated 3/31/21

Prevention Protocol

1. Review and update key contact lists of the following individuals for inclusion in the emergency plan binder:
 - a. Health care facilities with transfer agreements
 - b. Local health department
 - c. NJ State Department of Health- epidemiology
 - d. Hospital Infectious Disease contact
 - e. Vendors for supplies and food
2. Inventory all supplies, food, disposables, cleaning products, and equipment needs based on the disease process and order enough amounts
3. Contact the local or NJ State health department for guidance if needed supplies are not available for purchase
4. Post signage on all facility entrance doors regarding visitation
5. Restrict visitation in accordance with federal, state, and / or local DOH guidelines and have visitors sign in and complete a brief symptom questionnaire before being allowed to visit their family member in a non-restricted area
6. Arrange for telephone, email, facetime, and skype visits rather than face to face
7. Provide specific information regarding specific disease symptoms, handwashing, and use of PPE
8. All employees who display any symptoms must be excluded from work and cannot return to work until asymptomatic for the required period based on the disease process
9. Re-educate staff as appropriate regarding handwashing and prevention techniques
10. Monitor CDC guidance at www.cdc.gov for the specific disease process and update practices as recommended
11. Keep in touch with the local health department for guidance and direction

Employee Protocol

This protocol outlines actions to take for employees prior to, during, and after a disease outbreak.

Employee Monitoring

1. All employees will be monitored for symptoms each day when they report to work
2. Employees are required to notify their supervisor of any potential exposure to the infectious agent from travel or through family exposure

Management of Symptomatic Employees

1. Any employee that develops symptoms of the disease process will be immediately sent home
2. Any employee deemed potentially contagious will be sent home and will not be allowed to return to work until 10 days after symptom onset and 24 hours after last symptom was resolved or according to CDC guidance if different
3. A line list of employees exposed to or exhibiting symptoms will be created and continued until the last case is resolved as directed by the local health department

Management of Exposed Employees

1. Any employee exposed to the virus will be tested as directed by the local health department
2. Exposed employees will be required to quarantine outside of work for 14 days

Work Guidelines

1. Employees will be cohorted based on exposure.
2. Sick leave policies will be followed but may be modified to allow flexibility and consistency with public health guidance.
3. Employees will be notified of any changes to sick leave policies based on public health guidance.
4. Movement and monitoring decisions for employees with exposure to infectious agent will be made in consultation with the local and NJ State health departments.

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Required Education

1. The infection preventionist will work in conjunction with the medical director to identify employee education required based on local, state and federal guidance
2. The infection preventionist will coordinate the identification and provision of education with the staff educator, DON, Medical Director, and Administrator
3. The infection preventionist will serve as the point of contact for the local, state and federal agencies and will be responsible to keep up to date with changing guidance
4. The infection preventionist will be responsible to re-educate or coordinate re-education of staff based on changing guidance from public health agencies
5. Education will cover at a minimum the following:
 - a. Symptoms of the virus
 - b. How to prevent exposure to and transmission of infectious agents specific to the current virus
 - c. Correct Handwashing with competency evaluation thru direct observation
 - d. Correct type and use of PPE including donning, doffing and proper disposal
 - e. Job and task specific education to prevent the transmission of the infectious agent – i.e., laundry handling of soiled linens; dietary preparation of meals using disposable products and handoff of trays without entering affected units; housekeeping proper cleaning and disinfection; clinical staff isolation guidelines when providing care
 - f. How to recognize possible exposure and or symptoms
 - g. Reporting protocol in the event of exposure of residents
 - h. Review the facility protocols related to the infectious agent
 - i. Sick leave policy modifications as required
6. Employees who will work with affected residents and in affected areas of the facility will receive additional education as follows:
 - a. Be medically cleared for fit testing to use N95 respirators and then be fit tested and trained in the use of the N95 respirator
 - b. Be medically cleared and trained in the use of an alternative respiratory protection device
 - c. Employees will be educated, trained, and will practice the appropriate use of PPE prior to caring for a symptomatic or exposed Resident, including attention to correct use of PPE and prevention of contamination of clothing, skin, and the environment during the process of removing such equipment.

Isolation Protocol

Infection Control Precautions for COVID19

All employees, health care workers and visitors who enter the room of a resident with confirmed or suspected COVID 19 will adhere to COVID-19 transmission-based precautions.

Adherence to COVID-19 Transmission-Based Precautions

- Standard Precautions assume that every person is potentially infected or colonized with a pathogen that could be transmitted in the healthcare setting.
- Elements of Standard Precautions apply to residents with respiratory infections, including those caused by COVID19.
- Employee training will be conducted on all shifts and for all departments on the correct use, proper donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off), and disposal of any PPE.
- This document does not emphasize all aspects of Standard Precautions (e.g., injection safety)

General Information for COVID19

- Only essential personnel will enter the room of a symptomatic or exposed resident
- Dedicated staff will be assigned to care for symptomatic and exposed individuals and will receive specific education prior to working with these residents.

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- Employees entering the room of affected individuals will use PPE, including respiratory protection, as described below.
- Equipment used for more than one unaffected resident, will be cleaned and disinfected before use on another unaffected Resident according to manufacturer’s instructions.
- Employees entering the room soon after a resident with COVID19 symptoms or exposure vacates the room must use respiratory protection.

Standard Precautions

- Used for all residents when giving care
- Follow standard precautions depending of level of care provided
- Typically gloves – possibly gowns or face mask

COVID-19 Transmission-Based Precautions

- Used with suspected, symptomatic, exposed, or confirmed residents; also used for residents within 14 days of admission / readmission to the facility
- Resident wears face mask
- All staff PPE - Gown, gloves, mask (preferably N95 respirator) and eye protection

Protocol to Cohort Affected Individuals

If individuals exhibit any signs or symptoms of a contagious disease, they will be cohorted as much as possible to prevent the spread of the disease.

1. All affected residents will be isolated following CDC transmission protocols based on the disease process which may include the following:
 - a. Contact precautions
 - b. Droplet precautions
 - c. Airborne precautions
 - d. COVID-19 transmission-based precautions
2. If an individual is diagnosed with a contagious disease, the local health department will be notified.
3. Guidance of CDC and the state and local health department will be followed as appropriate to determine who and how to cohort based on the disease process and exposure period.
4. **COVID-19 Cohorting Guidelines**
 - a. The facility will identify four cohorts of residents: Cohort 1 (COVID (+) residents), Cohort 2 (exposed to a confirmed or suspected COVID case), Cohort 3 (asymptomatic, not exposed), and Cohort 4 (new admissions / re-admissions). To the extent possible, staff will NOT be rotated between cohorts.
 - b. The facility will designate an area where Cohort 1 residents will be housed. Cohort 1 residents (confirmed COVID (+) residents) may room together. If an entirely separate unit cannot be dedicated for Cohort 1 residents, a group of rooms on a unit will be designated.
 - i. COVID (+) residents who have met criteria for “recovery” may be cohorted with other COVID (+) or recovered COVID (+) residents. Decisions to move recovered COVID (+) residents back with unaffected residents will be made in consultation with the local DOH, attending physician, medical director, or in accordance with guidelines set forth by the CDC, CMS, or DOH.

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- c. **Cohort 2** residents are those that have been exposed to a confirmed COVID (+) case. COVID-19 transmission-based precautions will be implemented for these residents for a minimum of 14 days following exposure.
- d. **Cohort 3** residents are those that have not been exposed and are not showing symptoms. Strict isolation precautions are NOT required for these residents.
- e. **Cohort 4** residents are new or re-admissions within 14 days of entry to the facility. COVID-19 transmission-based precautions will be implemented for these residents for the first 14 days of the stay. If the resident remains asymptomatic for the duration of this time, the resident will then be moved to a Cohort 3 area.
 - i. Individuals who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 within the last three months AND have cleared transmission-based precautions do NOT require 14 days of quarantine and may be cohorted with non-exposed, COVID-negative residents.
- 5. The use of remote visits using technology will be used whenever possible by medical practitioners in conjunction with the nursing staff
- 6. The Infection Preventionist will maintain a line list and update the list each morning

Staff on the affected unit will not rotate to other locations or units in the facility through the duration of the outbreak period defined as the period from identification of the first case through 14 days after the last case is asymptomatic.

Testing Protocol - COVID-19

This protocol will be followed for any resident that develops symptoms of COVID-19:

- 1. Assessment**
 - a. Conduct a complete assessment including all vital signs and lung sounds and document symptoms before calling the physician.
- 2. Medical Tests**
 - a. If directed by local DOH and / or attending physician, rule out other sources of infection including influenza, pneumonia, other respiratory viruses, and / or urinary tract infection.
 - b. For symptomatic resident, a rapid antigen COVID-19 test will be obtained immediately. If positive, the resident will be considered COVID-positive and cohorted accordingly. If negative, transmission-based precautions will remain in place pending results of confirmatory PCR.
 - c. If a COVID19 test is required obtain test kit, obtain nasal swab after donning all PPE including gown, gloves, mask, and eye protection and immediately send to lab.
 - d. If the lab is not open refrigerate the sample and send to the lab immediately the next morning
 - e. If the COVID19 test is positive follow facility protocol for Isolation of confirmed COVID-19 case.
- 3. Universal Testing of Residents and Employees**
 - a. Testing of all residents and HCP will be conducted as directed by federal, state, or local governing bodies, or facility medical directorship.
 - b. All unvaccinated and partially vaccinated HCP will be tested at a frequency in accordance with county positivity rate and regional CALI score, but no less frequently than once a week.
 - c. Fully vaccinated HCP will not be required to undergo routine surveillance testing, but will be required to undergo outbreak testing.
 - d. A list of staff members who have not undergone routine testing by will be shared with the staffing coordinator and all department heads, to ensure that no such staff members will be permitted to work until testing is completed.

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- e. New hires will be required to undergo baseline testing upon hire.
- f. New admissions will undergo baseline testing upon admission.
- g. Should a significant number of staff test positive for COVID-19, the facility will deploy its emergency staffing plan.
- h. Newly symptomatic residents or HCP will be tested at onset of symptoms, regardless of interval between most recent negative test and symptom onset, and regardless of vaccination status.

Emergency Staffing Protocol

In the event of an emergency, the Administrator will make the decision to utilize emergency staffing strategies as necessary to provide for care and treatment of residents.

1. Employees will be notified of the decision to utilize emergency staffing strategies
2. Contingency capacity strategies include:
 - a. Adjusting staff schedules, hiring additional HCP, rotating HCP to positions that support patient care activities
 - i. Removing tasks from the nursing department that do not need to be completed by a CNA or nurse including but not limited to passing out water, answering call bells, passing out snacks and designate these tasks to alternate employees such as recreation or housekeeping.
 - ii. Unit clerks will assist on the unit as well as Rehab staff within the scope of their practice.
 - iii. Nursing Administration (DON, ADON, Unit Managers, Supervisors, MDS) may need to work on the units as needed.
 - iv. Social Services and Administration to assist on the units as necessary i.e., answering phone calls, call bells, passing out meal trays etc.
 - v. Dietary may utilize paper goods in order to free staff to assist in other areas.
 - b. Utilizing agency staff as necessary
 - c. Attempting to address social factors that might prevent HCP from reporting to work, e.g., childcare, transportation, and / or housing
 - d. Utilizing emergency waivers or changes to licensure requirements as appropriate
 - e. Requesting that HCP postpone elective time off from work
 - f. Allowing exposed/asymptomatic employees to continue to work, in accordance with CDC guidelines
3. Crisis capacity strategies include:
 - a. Implementing regional plans to transfer patients with COVID-19 to alternate care sites with adequate staffing
 - b. Implementing criteria to allow HCP with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 who have not met Return to Work Criteria to work, in accordance with CDC guidelines

Environmental Infection Control Protocol COVID – 19

1. Use dedicated or disposable medical equipment for a resident who is symptomatic and/or exposed. This may include b/p cuff, individual glucometer, wheelchair etc. All dedicated equipment should be clearly labeled with each individual's name.
2. All dedicated equipment will not be taken off any closed unit or moved to any unaffected sections of the facility and will be properly stored in the resident room or designated location.
3. Non-dedicated, non-disposable medical equipment, such as a Hoyer or other lift, shower chair etc. used for symptomatic or exposed Residents must be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's instructions and CDC guidelines between each affected resident.
4. Non-dedicated non disposable equipment used for exposed or symptomatic residents will not be used for or by any unaffected residents.

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5. All non-dedicated non disposable equipment used for symptomatic or exposed individuals must remain in the appropriate cohort area – either Cohort A or Cohort B and cannot be taken to any other areas of the facility.
6. Environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures will be followed consistently and correctly based on manufacturer instructions including using correct cleaning process and adhering to required drying times.
7. Routine cleaning and disinfection procedures (e.g., using cleaners and water to pre-clean surfaces prior to applying an EPA-registered, hospital-grade disinfectant to frequently touched surfaces or objects for appropriate contact times as indicated on the product’s label) are appropriate for COVID19, including those Resident-care areas in which aerosol-generating procedures are performed.
8. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are recommended for use against COVID19. These products can be identified by the following claim:
 - a. “[Product name] has demonstrated effectiveness against viruses similar to COVID19 on hard non-porous surfaces. Therefore, this product can be used against COVID19 when used in accordance with the directions for use against [name of supporting virus] on hard, non-porous surfaces.”
 - b. This claim or a similar claim, will be made only through the following communications outlets: technical literature distributed exclusively to health care facilities, physicians, nurses and public health officials, “1-800” consumer information services, social media sites and company websites (non-label related). Specific claims for “COVID19” will not appear on the product or master label.
 - c. See [additional information about EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claimsexternal icon](#).
9. If there are no available EPA-registered products that have an approved emerging viral pathogen claim for COVID19, products with label claims against human coronaviruses should be used according to label instructions.
10. Soiled linens from affected residents will be double bagged and placed in a designated outer bag and these linens will be washed after all other linens have been cleaned.
11. Washers, dryers and work surfaces will be cleaned and properly disinfected following the cleaning of soiled linens and personal items of affected residents has been completed.
12. Laundry employees will receive training regarding the proper use of PPE and handwashing to prevent exposure and transmission of the virus to others including family members.
13. Medical waste will be properly bagged in red labeled hazardous material bags and disposed of according to facility protocols.
14. No food carts from the kitchen will cross the entrance threshold to any affected unit. All trays will be passed through the door to a staff member on the unit and placed on a cart on the unit for delivery to residents.
15. Carts on the unit will be cleaned and disinfected after each meal. Unit carts will not be removed from the unit if there are active cases.
16. Maintenance workers will not bring carts carrying equipment on and off the unit. Any equipment can be transferred to a dedicated unit cart and after use all equipment will be cleaned before removal from the unit.

Housekeeping Protocol

1. Evaluate all cleaning products to be sure they meet CDC & EPA requirements for use with the designated disease. If using EPA-registered disinfectants or cleaning/disinfectant products with demonstrated (proven) viricidal claims against flu viruses, check the manufacturer’s instructions on “spectrum of action” and method of use (dilution, contact time, etc.). If using a product labeled only for use as a disinfectant, remember that federal law requires those surfaces being treated to be cleaned first.
2. Follow product cleaning instructions and allow product to remain on the surface for the recommended time period or until dry.
3. Use disposable wipes disposing in resident trash cans only after use to prevent carrying infectious materials from room to room.
4. Use trash cans and other disposal receptacles that are no touch as much as possible
5. Do not rotate housekeeping staff who work on an affected unit to other locations within the facility.
6. Clean all high touch areas multiple times (at least 3x’s) throughout the day including:
 - a. Doorknobs

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- b. Handrails
 - c. Tray tables
 - d. Furniture surfaces
 - e. Light switches
 - f. Bathroom faucet handles
 - g. Appliance handles
 - h. Elevator buttons
 - i. Remote controls
7. Monitor all soap, paper towel, and hand sanitizer dispensers' and replenish as needed.
 8. Double bag all trash from affected rooms and place in common collection point for pick up and disposal.
 9. Wear all required PPE when cleaning affected rooms and dispose of PPE before leaving the room and wash hands
 10. Do not wear PPE in hallways or between rooms.
 11. Report any symptoms of the disease immediately to the nurse and your supervisor.

Activity Protocol

Maintaining quality of life is very important during a restriction on visitors and group activities. Residents who listen to the news may also be very concerned about the effect of this virus if they get sick. Keeping up morale and using distraction to reduce stress is equally important during a crisis as providing excellent physical care.

Staff will use as many tools as possible to keep residents actively engaged and encourage as much socialization as possible through alternative activities. The following is a list of suggestions that may be useful.

1. Initiate unit-based competitions that require resident involvement. Some suggestions include activities that can be conducted in each unit hallway throughout the day by any staff member. Residents can remain in their rooms by the doorway and participate. Take the activity calendar and redo it to reflect provision of the same activities rotating to resident units rather than large groups in one room where social distancing is not realistic. Providing small prizes at a low cost to cheer residents is a nice incentive to participate. Giving a paper ticket to the winners with a drawing weekly with a nice prize also is another incentive to participate. Staff often get involved and should be encouraged to do so since they need the mental stress relieve as well.
 - Memory Jeopardy,
 - Wheel of Fortune
 - Hallway Bingo,
 - Hallway Sing Along,
 - Wandering Musician
 - In room chair dancing,
 - Hallway current events,
 - Ethnic and holiday events can be celebrated by special meals
 - Religious support is also important during these times so consider setting up broadcasts of religious services and staff leading religious activities who are comfortable doing so.
 - Make copies of simple puzzle games or fill in the blank games that provide residents with the opportunity to create a funny story.
 - Providing pens and paper for residents to write notes to their loved one to mail and for writing down their favorite memories for family and creating memory books is a great activity.
 - Create My Cookbook is a website that is easy for a staff member to use who can collect favorite recipes from each resident and create a resident cookbook.
2. Identify individual resident interests and provide reading materials, or help with favorite radio or TV stations so residents can listen to their favorite music or TV shows.

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3. Consider having residents do useful projects to help such as dictating brief notes to their friends in the facility to cheer them. Everyone likes to receive a message that someone cares and is thinking about them. To minimize cross contamination, residents can write their wish on a piece of paper or dictate to a staff member who can write and deliver.
4. Provide simple crafts that can be done in their rooms appropriate to their interest, ability and safety needs.
5. Provide access to a computer on wheel only touched by staff who can place it outside the doorway of resident rooms so they can facetime with family.
6. Provide written directions so residents with iPads and iPhones can facetime on their own.
7. Have staff write one- or two-word notes and include on resident meal trays to brighten their days.
8. For residents with cognitive loss select activities that are appropriate for these residents to participate in. Sing-alongs, wandering musician, movies, and simple tactile activities work well. Remember not to share any tactile objects among residents. Residents will also benefit from facetime visits but staff need to coordinate this for them. Activities run by a staff member in the hallways positioning residents inside their doorways will also promote socialization as will more frequent staff rounds with short conversations.
9. Have staff individually take residents for walks in the hallway and outside for fresh air one on one for brief periods to decrease anxiety and minimize behaviors. Do not take any resident out of their room if they have been exposed or are symptomatic.
10. Brightening resident rooms with small flower arrangements is also a nice touch.
11. Social worker visits give residents support and time to discuss their fears.

This is just the tip of the “idea iceberg”. You are only limited by your creativity. Involve all staff and ask them to help in those areas they are comfortable doing so. Be sure to recognize staff as well for their hard work and thank them every day for taking such good care of their residents.

Communication / Reporting Protocol

1. The facility will update residents, families, and staff any time there is a change in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases (staff or residents); a minimum of weekly communication will be done.
2. Communication with residents, families, and staff may be conducted via an effective and targeted platform (e.g., post, email listserv, virtual visits, facility hotline, conference call, webinar, robo-text), and will include information about cumulative outbreak data and actions taken by the facility to mitigate the spread of disease.
3. The facility website will display:
4. The facility’s Outbreak Plan
5. A method of communication for residents and / or family members to utilize for urgent calls or complaints
6. Weekly updates with the status of the facility and information about what is occurring at the facility, including menus, scheduled activities, etc.
7. Line listings and data sheets will be submitted to the local and / or state DOH as directed by same.
8. Reporting to the state on COVID-related data, PPE supply, and staffing will be completed per state requirements.
9. Reporting to the CDC on COVID-related data, PPE supply, and staffing will be completed per CMS / state requirements.
10. Reporting of COVID-19 data via NHSN will be completed at least twice weekly or in accordance with CMS / state guidelines if different.

Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccines will be made available to residents and staff on designated clinic dates. The facility will provide educational material to residents and staff regarding the vaccine. Vaccine will not be administered in the absence of written informed consent from the individual receiving the vaccine (or his / her legal representative).

Per CDC and NJDOH guidance, asymptomatic employees who have been fully vaccinated (≥ 2 weeks following second dose) will not be required to quarantine for fourteen days following an exposure IF exclusion from work will place the facility in a “crisis capacity staffing” scenario.