Welcome Nursing Facility Providers!

COVID-19 Updates and Q&A with LTCR and DSHS
June 16, 2021

For more information:
Email: LTCRPolicy@hhs.texas.gov
Phone: 512-438-3161
COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Robert Ochoa
Senior Policy Specialist
Policy & Rules
Long-term Care Regulation
Webinar Schedule Change

Starting July 1, the Nursing Facility Provider Webinars will change to a **monthly schedule**. Webinars will be held the second Wednesday of every month.

Consequently, the next NF Provider Webinars will be held:

- June 30\textsuperscript{th} (last day of the bi-weekly schedule)
- July 14\textsuperscript{th}
- August 11\textsuperscript{th}

As always, we will send notifications for the webinars through **GovDelivery alerts** and post them on the **Nursing Facility Provider Portal**.
Survey – Becoming CNA Clinical Site

HHSC is polling NFs to identify NFs that are Nurse Aide Training and Competency Evaluation Programs or Nurse Aide Competency Evaluation Programs that would like to partner with a NATCEP to be a clinical site for individuals who do not work for their facility. Large numbers of temporary nurse aides are beginning the process of becoming certified using the HHSC transition plan, and many will need a clinical site.

If you are interested, take the short survey(link is external). HHSC will publish a list of NFs willing to be a clinical site for individuals who do not work in their facility.
HHSC is asking nursing facility administrators to complete an anonymous five-minute survey about their Certified Nurse Aide workforce needs. Please complete the survey by June 18, 2021.

HHSC will use this information to understand CNA workforce needs throughout the state and inform potential future initiatives.

Take the survey

The survey link can also be found on the NF Provider Portal, under the News & Alerts section.
Reminder – Checking COVID-19 Vaccinations

A recent letter issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) urges all hospitals, emergency departments, and urgent care facilities to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to eligible patients – even if it’s only the first dose.

NFs admitting residents from these entities should confirm with the resident (or resident representative) if the resident has received the COVID-19 vaccine and whether the second dose is still needed.
COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

David Gruber
Associate Commissioner for Regional and Local Health Operations
DSHS
COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Christine Riley
Clinical Policy Specialist
Policy & Rules
Long-term Care Regulation

- RSV Advisory
- Cohortung Guidance Review
RSV Health Advisory

The CDC issued a health advisory on June 10, 2021 to notify clinicians and caregivers about increased risk of interseasonal respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) across Southern parts of the US, including Texas.

RSV can be associated with severe disease in older adults. Facilities are encouraged to implement broader testing for RSV among those presenting with respiratory symptoms who test negative for COVID-19.

This health advisory also serves as a reminder to staff of LTC facilities to avoid reporting to work while acutely ill – even if they test negative for COVID-19.
Staffing – COVID-19 Positive Cohort

The recent update to the COVID-19 Response Emergency Rule removed the requirement that NFs have separate, dedicated staff for each COVID-19 cohort.

Per federal and state rule, NFs must have infection prevention and control policies and procedures that follow accepted national standards related to standard precautions and transmission-based precautions to prevent the spread of infections.

Updates to CDC guidance over the past few months have simplified recommendations related to staffing during COVID-19.
Cohorting Guidance

Please note that the COVID-19 Response Emergency Rule still requires NFs to have:

• cohorting plans that include designated space for COVID-19 negative residents, COVID-19 positive residents, and residents with unknown COVID-19 status; and

• spaces for staff to don and doff PPE that minimize the movement of staff through other areas of the facility

NFs are still required to cohort residents based on COVID-19 status.
Staffing – COVID-19 Positive Cohort

Per CDC guidance, NFs should have separate staff dedicated to caring for COVID-19 positive residents.

If possible, the staff should avoid working on both the COVID-19 care unit and other units during the same shift.

The CDC recommends implementing other staffing mitigation strategies before sharing staff between COVID-19 positive cohorts and other cohorts.
Staffing – Unknown COVID-19 Cohort

NFs may share staff between Unknown COVID-19 cohorts and negative COVID-19 cohorts if necessary.

NFs working with Unknown COVID-19 status cohorts should continue following all appropriate infection prevention and control measures, including wearing full PPE with proper donning and doffing, proper hand hygiene, etc.
Non-Direct Care Staff

Non-direct care staff (i.e. dietary staff, environmental staff) may enter Unknown COVID-19 Status cohort areas.

Non-direct care staff entering the Unknown COVID-19 Status cohort area should wear all appropriate PPE.

CDC recommends non-direct care staff be excluded from COVID-19 positive cohort areas to the extent possible.
COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Bijendra Bhandari
Infection Prevention Policy Specialist
Policy & Rules
Long-term Care Regulation

Facemask Guidance Review
Reminder – Facemask Guidance

While Governor Abbott’s Executive Order (GA-36) prohibits governmental entities from mandating facemasks, Medicare/Medicaid-certified NFs must still follow CMS rules related to facemasks.

Additionally, all NFs must have infection prevention and control policies and procedures that follow accepted national standards related to standard precautions and transmission-based precautions to prevent the spread of infections.

The CDC is an accepted national standard.
Reminder – Facemask Guidance

We will review CDC guidance related to the following infection prevention and control measures:

• Staff PPE usage & physical distancing
• Resident facemask usage & physical distancing
• Facemask usage and physical distancing for visitors
### Staff PPE Usage Breakdown

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<th>Situation</th>
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| Full PPE (N95 respirator, gown, gloves, face shield/goggles) | When working in the:  
  • COVID-19 positive cohort  
  • Unknown COVID-19 cohort                                                                 |
| Facemask                            | When in all other areas of the building.*                                                       |
| No facemask                         | *Fully-vaccinated staff may remove their mask while on break.  
  *Staff participating in in-person meetings where all members are fully-vaccinated may remove their facemask. |
Physical Distancing - Staff

Staff members should maintain physical distancing:

• Between themselves and visitors
• Between themselves and other staff when either staff member is not fully vaccinated.

Staff members participating in an in-person meeting where all members are fully-vaccinated do not need to maintain physical distancing.
Facemask Guidance - Residents

Per CDC guidance, residents should wear a facemask when outside of their rooms, if tolerated.

However, residents do not need to wear a facemask when:

• Eating or drinking
• Participating in group activities or communal dining, unless unvaccinated residents are present
• Participating in a personal visit where the visitor and resident are both fully-vaccinated, in a private visitation area.
Residents should maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet, except the following situations:

• A fully-vaccinated resident does not need to maintain physical distancing between themselves and other fully-vaccinated residents.

• A fully-vaccinated resident does not need to maintain physical distancing between themselves and fully-vaccinated personal visitors.

• A resident does not need to maintain physical distancing between themselves and essential caregivers/end-of-life visitors.
Group Activity Guidance - Residents

NFs will have to operationalize the guidance related resident’s use of facemasks during communal dining and activities as appropriate.

CMS and CDC encourage facilities to educate residents on these updated guidelines and to follow the guidance appropriate to their vaccination status.
Facemask Guidance - Visitors

Per CMS and the CDC, all visitors must wear a facemask or face covering during:

- A personal visit if either the visitor or resident is not fully-vaccinated
- Walking to and from the private indoor or outdoor visitation area
- A personal visit not conducted in a private indoor or outdoor visitation area

If both the visitor and resident are fully-vaccinated, both may remove their facemask or face covering during a visit in a private visitation area.
Facemask Guidance - Visitors

A NF is allowed to ask a visitor about the visitor’s COVID-19 vaccination status.

A NF cannot prevent a visitor from participating in a visit due to the visitor’s vaccination status or unwillingness to provide their vaccination status.

A visitor who does not provide information on their COVID-19 vaccination status should be considered unvaccinated for purposes of facemask/physical distancing measures.
State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Statewide phone: 800-252-2412
• Statewide email: ltc.ombudsman@hhs.texas.gov

State Ombudsman: Patty Ducayet, 737-704-9075 (or) patty.ducayet@hhs.Texas.gov

Bi-Weekly Facebook Live Q&A for Families of LTC Residents: Every other Wednesday (on weeks with no NF Provider webinar), 12:15 to 12:45 https://www.facebook.com/texasLtcombudsman?fref-ts
TMF Health Quality Institute
CMS Quality Improvement Organization

Melody Malone, PT, CPHQ, MHA
Quality Improvement Specialist
Good News:

• Vaccination Upon Discharge
  DSHS Commissioner Dr. John Hellerstedt issued a letter to “all hospitals, emergency departments, and urgent care facilities to consider offering COVID-19 vaccination to all patients at discharge.”

• The letter emphasizes that clinical judgement should be used with regard to patient eligibility and that providers should not miss an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person, even if that means some doses may be wasted
### NHSN Side Tabs:

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New and Updated Trainings LTCF COVID-19 Modules

- **COVID-19 Resident Therapeutics Reporting Pathway pdf** – June, 2021

- **A Focused Review of Vaccination Status in the Resident Impact and Facility Capacity Surveillance Reporting Pathway pdf** – April 2021

- **How to Upload a CSV File for Point of Care Testing Results [Video – 41 min]** – April, 2021

- **Point of Care Test Reporting Tool Recently Asked Questions and Common Mistakes [Video – 46 min]** – April, 2021
Reporting Prior week’s Vaccinations:

NHSN - National Healthcare Safety Network

Weekly Vaccination Calendar

05/31/2021 (Monday) - 06/06/2021 (Sunday)

06/07/2021 (Monday) - 06/13/2021 (Sunday)
- COVID-19: HCW
- COVID-19: Residents

06/14/2021 (Monday) - 06/20/2021 (Sunday)
NHSN Q&A

Q: How do I change my email address in NHSN?
A: It’s a 2 step process:
  1\text{st} update the email address in \textbf{NHSN}
  2\text{nd} then change the email address in \textbf{SAMS}

How to Edit Email Addresses in SAMS and NHSN Facilities (cdc.gov) – see note at the bottom of the document!

SAMS - Secure Access Management Services
NHSN Q&A

Q: How do I get Level 3 Access

A: It is a multistep process:

1st - be a user in NHSN – this grants you Level 1 access. Have your NHSN FA put you in as a user. **DO NOT re-enroll the facility in NHSN!**

See: [LTC COVID-19 How to Add a User (cdc.gov)](https://www.cdc.gov)

2nd – Then review the details on obtaining SAMS Level 3 access: [Increasing LTCF SAMS Level Access to NHSN](https://www.cdc.gov) and begin the process.
NHSN and your QAPI reporting

Bar Charts of COVID-19 Vaccination Data

Note: The data in this example output are fictitious and intended for illustrative purposes only.
NHSN RESOURCES

• TMF NHSN resources: NHSN Resources

• CDC NHSN COVID19 Module: https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/covid19/index.html
CMS Targeted COVID-19 Training for Frontline Nursing Home Staff & Management Learning

- Available through the CMS Quality, Safety & Education Portal (QSEP).

- Can be completed on a cell phone

- Frontline nursing home staff modules:
  - Module 1: Hand Hygiene and PPE
  - Module 2: Screening and Surveillance
  - Module 3: Cleaning the Nursing Home
  - Module 4: Cohorting
  - Module 5: Caring for Residents with Dementia in a Pandemic

- 3 hours total training time

- Management staff modules:
  - Module 1: Hand Hygiene and PPE
  - Module 2: Screening and Surveillance
  - Module 3: Cleaning the Nursing Home
  - Module 4: Cohorting
  - Module 5: Caring for Residents with Dementia in a Pandemic
  - Module 6: Basic Infection Control
  - Module 7: Emergency Preparedness and Surge Capacity
  - Module 8: Addressing Emotional Health of Residents and Staff
  - Module 9: Telehealth for Nursing Homes
  - Module 10: Getting Your Vaccine Delivery System Ready

- 4 hours total training time
Reach out to us at: nhnetwork@tmf.org to submit requests for assistance with NHSN reporting problems or quality improvement assistance.
COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Heidi Lizyness
Policy Specialist
Policy & Rules
Long-term Care Regulation
Q&A

Are pets and/or therapy animals allowed in NFs?

There are no state or federal rules (or guidance) prohibiting animals from entering a nursing facility during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any animal that enters a nursing facility must be vaccinated and not endanger the health and safety of residents.

A facility may implement their own policies that take into account any allergies for prospective roommates or those residents in the same area where the pet will be.

(cont. on next slide)
Q&A

Are pets and/or therapy animals allowed in NFs? (cont.)

NFs will have to consider proper infection prevention and control measures for any group activities as it relates to use of therapy animals (i.e. proper hand hygiene, facemasks and physical distancing when unvaccinated individuals are present, limit participation to residents who are COVID-19 negative or who have recovered from COVID-19).
For nurse aides hired during the pandemic and seeking certification under the Nurse Aide Transition Emergency Rules, does an RN from a NATCEP have to come to our facility to train the nurse aide?

No. The Nurse Aide Transition Emergency Rule allows nurse aides hired during the pandemic to use qualifying hours accumulated during the pandemic to count towards the clinical and classroom training hours of a Nurse Aide Training and Competency Evaluation Program (NATCEP).

(Cont. on next slide)
Q&A

...Does an RN from a NATCEP have to come to our facility to train the nurse aide? (cont.)

For training and work hours to qualify towards NATCEP classroom and clinical hours, the nurse aide candidate must be working under and be trained by a nurse who meets the qualifications to be a NATCEP Nurse Instructor, which include that the instructor be a registered nurse with two years of experience, one of which must be in the provision of long-term care facility services.

(cont. on next slide)
Q&A

...Does an RN from a NATCEP have to come to our facility to train the nurse aide? (cont.)

The instructor must also have completed a course in teaching adults or have experience in teaching adults or supervising nurse aides, and he or she cannot be a director of nursing.

The RN overseeing the nurse aide candidate does not need to be from a NATCEP, but must meet these qualifications.
GovDelivery Alerts
Don’t forget to sign up for GovDelivery alerts
https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXHHS_C/subscriber/new
Select “Nursing Facility Resources” as a topic option to receive webinar updates.

CMS/CDC COVID-19 Training
CMS is offering free online training for nursing facilities related to COVID-19
Click here to view currently available pre-recorded trainings.
Facilities also have access to the CMS Targeted COVID-19 Training for Frontline Nursing Home Staff and Management
Reminders

CNA Symposium Webinar Recordings.


For CNAs, this offering may meet some, but not all, of the annual in-service requirements. No CE is offered to licensed nurses, administrators or social workers for viewing these videos.

Email nurseaideregistry@hhsc.state.tx.us with questions.
Questions?

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