



COVID-19 Testing in Nursing Home Compendium

This content reflects Telligen’s best understanding based on currently available information about COVID-19 as of October 15, 2020. Therefore, it remains critically important to continually check the CDC’s most up-to-date guidance, as well as the guidance from your state/local health departments. CDC guidance may be adapted by state and local health departments to respond to rapidly changing local circumstances.

Testing Requirements



August 26th, 2020: [QSO Memo 20-38-NH](#)

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to Update County Data for COVID-19 Testing Weekly and Allow Use of State or County Data in Updated Methodology: CMS has updated the [Excel Zip file](#) that flags COVID-19 positive test rates in counties. CMS modified the method for classifying a county as green, yellow, or red and expanded the measure to cover results over a 14-day period in each county instead of seven days. Additionally, CMS will post data weekly and will allow facilities to use test positivity data released by their state or county if the data is more recent than the CMS data.

Testing & Reporting Resources



[CDC guidance on the spread of COVID-19](#)

How easily a virus spreads from person to person can vary. The virus that causes COVID-19 appears to spread more efficiently than influenza but not as efficiently as measles, which is among the most contagious viruses known to affect people. People who are infected but do not show symptoms can also spread the virus to others. We are still learning about how the virus spreads and the severity of illness it causes.

[CMS Updates COVID-19 Testing Methodology for Nursing Homes](#)

Under guidance CMS issued on August 26, 2020, nursing homes must test staff at a frequency of once monthly if the facility’s county positivity rate is less than five percent. Staff testing frequency increases to once weekly if the county positivity rate is between five and 10 percent. Finally, testing frequency increases to twice weekly if the county positivity rate exceeds 10 percent.

[CDC COVID-19 Testing Resources](#)

CDC has a variety of resources to support the vital role that nursing home personnel play during the COVID-19 pandemic. The link above provides information and resources about testing and specimen collection, ways to perform testing safely and accurately, and the regulatory requirements under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), and more.



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[CDC Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

This interim guidance is for clinicians caring for patients with confirmed infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

[CDC: Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19](#)

Review CDC's key findings and evidence supporting ending isolation and precautions for persons with COVID-19 using a symptom-based strategy

[CMS: COVID-19 Testing and Reporting Requirements \(PDF\)](#)

This comprehensive guide for nursing homes is to support better understanding of COVID-19 testing and reporting requirements.

[CDC: Understanding Compliance with OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)

This document is intended to help employers understand and comply with OSHA's temporary enforcement guidance for the Respiratory Protection standard (29 CFR § 1910.134).

[CDC: Contact Tracing for COVID-19](#)

For COVID-19, a [close contact](#) is defined, by the CDC, as any individual who was within six feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. The public health evaluation of close contacts to patients with laboratory-confirmed or probable COVID-19 may vary depending on the exposure setting. Contacts in special populations and/or congregate settings require additional considerations and may need handoff to a senior health department investigator or special team. Additional guidance on managing these contacts can be found in [Outbreak Investigations](#).

[CDC: Interim Guidance for Rapid Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2](#)

Antigen tests can be used in a variety of testing strategies to respond to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This interim guidance is intended for clinicians who order antigen tests, receive antigen test results, and/or perform point of care testing, as well as for laboratory professionals who perform antigen testing in a laboratory setting or at the point of care and report those results.

[CDC's guidance on testing for nursing homes](#)

Review the CDC's guidance on testing for nursing homes, including an algorithm that explains what to do if you're testing a symptomatic vs. asymptomatic individual, and under outbreak or routine testing conditions.



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[CDC: eCR Now: COVID-19 Electronic Case Reporting for Healthcare Providers](#)

Electronic Case Reporting (eCR) is the automated generation and transmission of case reports from the electronic health record (EHR) to public health agencies for review and action. eCR makes disease reporting from healthcare to public health faster and easier. It moves data securely and seamlessly—from the EHR at the point of care, to data systems at state, territorial, and local agencies. eCR also allows public health to provide information back to healthcare professionals. This timely data sharing provides a real time picture of COVID-19 to support outbreak management.

[CDC: Testing in Nursing Home FAQ Document](#)

Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document to address common questions related to testing in nursing homes

[FDA FAQ on Testing](#)

Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document from the Federal Drug Administration to address common questions related to testing in nursing homes.

Tools

[CMS: Toolkit on State Actions to Mitigate COVID-19 in Nursing Homes:](#)

This toolkit catalogs the many innovative solutions designed at the state level to protect our nation's vulnerable nursing home residents during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The toolkit includes up-to-date information, guidance, and innovative programs designed to increase vaccine use against influenza virus, pneumococcus (bacterium), and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

[CMS: Flowchart for Medicare payment of COVID-19 testing:](#)

Use this tool to help understand the processes related to Medicare payment for COVID-19 viral testing in skilled nursing facilities and nursing facilities.

[CDC: Infection Prevention and Control Assessment and Response Tool](#)

This is an infection control assessment and response tool (ICAR) that can be used to help nursing homes identify gaps and mitigate challenges to prepare for coronavirus.

Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA)

[Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments \(CLIA\)](#)

CLIA regulate laboratory testing and require clinical laboratories to be certified before they can accept human samples for diagnostic testing. This CMS site provides details for nursing homes on how to obtain waivers, and how to perform testing. Please



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view the brochure: [How to Apply for CLIA Certificate of Waiver](#) and how to submit your application form ([CMS Form 116](#)) to the state ([CLIA State Agency Contacts](#)) where the provider who is applying is located.

How to Become a CLIA-Certified Assisted Living Facility & Receive Abbott Test Kits:

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is sending 540,000 COVID-19 test kits made by Abbott to assisted living communities this week. To receive a kit from HHS, a community by law must have a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) Certificate of Waiver to perform testing. Providers who wish to become CLIA certified must apply for a CLIA Certificate. Please view the brochure, [How to Apply for CLIA Certificate of Waiver](#) and submit your application form ([CMS Form 116](#)) to the state ([CLIA State Agency Contacts](#)) where the provider who is applying is located.

[CLIA FAQ \(PDF\):](#)

Check out this Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document to address common questions related to Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments

[CMS: Medicare and Medicaid Programs, Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments \(CLIA\), and Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Additional Policy and Regulatory Revisions in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

This interim final rule with comment period (IFC) revises regulations to strengthen CMS' ability to enforce compliance with Medicare and Medicaid long-term care (LTC) facility requirements for reporting information related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), establishes a new requirement for LTC facilities for COVID-19 testing of facility residents and staff, establishes new requirements in the hospital and critical access hospital (CAH) Conditions of Participation (CoPs) for tracking the incidence and impact of COVID-19 to assist public health officials in detecting outbreaks and saving lives, and establishes requirements for all CLIA laboratories to report COVID-19 test results to the Secretary of Health and Human Services in such form and manner, and at such timing and frequency, as the Secretary may prescribe during the Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Information for Healthcare Professionals



[CDC: Clinical Care Guidance for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

This interim guidance is for clinicians caring for patients with confirmed infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). CDC will update this interim guidance as more information becomes available.

[CDC: Information for Healthcare Professionals](#)

Answers to a variety of COVID-19 questions to help healthcare workers.

[CMS: National Training Program to Strengthen Nursing Home Infection Control Practices](#)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has implemented a nursing home training program for frontline nursing home staff and nursing home management. The training is designed to equip both frontline caregivers and their management with the knowledge they need to stop the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in their nursing homes.

[CDC: Infection Prevention Training](#)



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The Nursing Home Infection Preventionist Training course is designed for individuals responsible for infection prevention and control (IPC) programs in nursing homes. The course was produced by CDC in collaboration with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Point Of Care (POC) Training:

Review the manufacturer's instructions for use and the manufacturer's online training at <https://www.bdveritor.com/> or <https://togetheragain.guidel.com/> (depending on the machine you got).

State Department of Public Health LTC Resources



Colorado:

[Colorado Department of Public Health COVID-19 LTC Resources](#)

Illinois:

[Illinois Department of Public Health COVID-19 LTC Resources](#)

Iowa:

[Iowa Department of Public Health COVID-19 LTC Resources](#)

Oklahoma:

[Oklahoma Department of Public Health COVID-19 LTC Resources](#)

Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) Support



[Telligen QIN-QIO](#) (Covering Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, and Oklahoma)

Contact us at: nursinghome@telligen.com

To locate the QIN-QIO in your state: <https://www.qioprogram.org/locate-your-qio>