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CDC Webinar Trainings for LTCF COVID-19 Module: New Mandatory Reporting

CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network has announced two upcoming webinar trainings for the new **LTCF COVID-19 Module**, which is expected to be a new requirement by CMS. The final rule from CMS on this requirement is still pending. However, CDC is making the module available to nursing homes now.

The training webinars will be recorded and posted to the [LTCF COVID-19 Module webpage](#) with a PDF of the slide presentation.

First Topic: COVID-19 Module Overview for Long-term Care Facilities
Thursday, April 30, 2020
1:30-3:00 PM EDT

Second Topic: COVID-19 Enrollment Guidance for Long-term Care Facilities
Friday, May 1, 2020
1:30-3:00 PM EDT

Learn how to join these webinars on the [CDC website](#).

If you have any questions, please email CDC at NHSN@cdc.gov and include LTCF COVID-19 in the subject line.

CDC Increases Priority for COVID-19 Testing in Long Term Care Residents

This week, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) made changes to its [priority classifications for COVID-19 testing](#). The CDC has now modified its priority

classifications into two categories: high priority and priority, and both healthcare facility workers with symptoms and residents in long term care facilities with symptoms are classified as high priority.

In addition, the CDC states that healthcare workers with contact with a person with known or suspected COVID-19 should be considered for testing. Residents and health care workers in long term care facilities without symptoms may also be prioritized by state or local health departments or clinicians, for reasons including public health monitoring, sentinel surveillance, or screening of other asymptomatic individuals.

Previously, the CDC identified three priority levels for testing. Patients in long term care facilities with symptoms were identified as priority two for testing while healthcare workers with symptoms were identified as priority one and healthcare workers without symptoms as priority three.

This update represents a positive step in continuing the push for better access to testing for both long term care residents and staff. Providers should use this guidance when seeking testing from hospitals, physicians, labs and local officials and advocating for faster turnaround times.

For more information, please see [AHCA/NCAL's recent guidance on testing](#). Facilities can refer to AHCA/NCAL's list of [vendors](#) who provide testing in nursing home setting and are FDA-approved.

How Can the Ombudsman Program Help?

The Ombudsman program's primary focus is to protect and promote the health, safety, welfare and rights of long-term care residents. Ombudsman programs are a community resource and their outreach can help to calm fears by providing information and resources to residents, their families and center staff. The following are just a few examples of how the Ombudsman program can assist center staff.

- Answering questions from resident's family, who may have additional concerns because they are not able to visit their loved one in person;
- Providing information and assistance to staff regarding individual resident and family concerns related to dementia care and ideas on providing individualized activities.
- Serving as a resource to facilitate communications between the facility and other agencies, such as public health, the Aging & Disability Resource Center and Centers for Independent Living to facilitate resident transitions to home;
- Assisting with virtual resident and family councils, or similar meetings, when possible;
- Educating the public through the media on the importance of the work of care providers; reminding in a public way to show gratitude and kindness to staff.

Administrators and/or Directors of Nursing should talk with their Ombudsman Program to identify together what is most helpful for the facility needs during this unprecedented pandemic.

How can I contact the Ombudsman program?

- To find a program near you, visit this [website](#).
- Call the Eldercare Locator: 1-800-677-1116
- More information about the Ombudsman program is available [online](#).

CDC Launches LTC Frontline Staff Training Webinar

CDC has developed resources for frontline staff in long term care facilities. These short webinars are all published on the [Key Strategies to Prepare for COVID-19 in Long-term Care Facilities \(LTCFs\) webpage](#) at the bottom under a “Webinar Series” section. These new webinars are intended to be a training tool/resource for frontline long term care staff members. CDC has also listed three “Additional Resources” to this page, which have been updated previously.

Here are the direct links to each webinar:

- [Sparkling Surfaces](#)
- [Clean Hands](#)
- [Closely Monitor Residents](#)
- [Keep COVID-19 Out!](#)
- [PPE Lessons](#)

And the new additional resources are

- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#)
- [Additional Guidance for Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Settings](#)
- [Preparedness Checklist for Nursing Homes and Other Long-Term Care Settings](#)

CDC Updates COVID-19 Symptoms

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have updated their [list of COVID-19 symptoms](#). The symptoms now include cough and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing or at least two of the following symptoms: fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, and new loss of taste or smell.

With the addition of these symptoms, AHCA/NCAL has updated our relevant resources, including our [screening checklist](#) for essential personnel and visitors, as well as our [sample daily log for personnel](#). If you created your own screening tools, you should update to include the additional symptoms.

Please email COVID19@ahca.org for additional questions, or visit ahcancal.org/coronavirus for more information.

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