



FOCUS POINT NEWSLETTER FOCUS POINT COVID ALERT 6/26/2020

Over the past week, we have seen multiple new resources and guidance from Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Social Services, CMS, and others related to COVID-19. We continually hear about on-going outbreaks, the expectation that we remain vigilant and compliant with guidance that is constantly being updated, and the prediction of a second wave of illness in the fall. We know that it is hard to sort through all of the various guidance and just when you think you understand something, there is an update. CHC is working hard to keep abreast and to offer you resources that will be of help, however, we encourage you to carefully read the resources that we provide to you. If you believe that we have missed something, let us know. If you see something new or different, please let us know and update your policy or resource tool.



What have we learned from the COVID Focus Surveys in Nursing Homes?

Overwhelmingly, we have done well – you have implemented precautions, you have policies, you demonstrate infection control surveillance, you communicate with residents and families, you report to NHSH, VDH and OLC and you have educated staff. However, we are seeing deficiencies when the surveyors are on-site with consistent staff compliance. Observational audits are critical to your on-going monitoring. Making rounds and observations throughout the facility [not just on nursing units] is a first step, but you also need to consider the importance of turning those rounds into observational audits for immediate action when variances are observed, to track the outcomes of the observations for compliance and to establish a means of feedback and accountability for on-going compliance. The majority of these tags are being cited at F-880 [Infection Control] and we also know from recent CMS guidance that this F-tag has its own level of enforcement and the tag history will stay with you for at least 2 years as outlined in QSO 20-31 of 6/1/2020. [Link here.](#)



CMS -- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Nursing Home Visitation

The 6/23/2020 CMS document found [here](#) provides CMS guidance on visitation to the nursing facilities. This guidance is significantly different than guidance previously offered by CMS and/or the CDC. While much of this current guidance appears to be consistent with what we as long-term providers have been saying for a long time, it also includes the following statement:

1. What steps should nursing homes take before reopening to visitors?

Nursing homes should continue to follow CMS and CDC guidance for preventing the transmission of COVID-19, and follow state and local direction.

Because nursing home residents are especially vulnerable, CMS does not recommend reopening facilities to visitors (except for compassionate care situations) until phase three when:

- *There have been no new, nursing home onset COVID-19 cases in the nursing home for 28 days (through phases one and two)*
- *The nursing home is not experiencing staff shortages*
- *The nursing home has adequate supplies of personal protective equipment and essential cleaning and disinfection supplies to care for residents*
- *The nursing home has adequate access to testing for COVID-19*
- *Referral hospital(s) have bed capacity on wards and intensive care units*

5. What factors should nursing homes consider when making decisions about visitation? CMS encourages that any decisions to relax requirements or conduct creative alternatives within nursing homes be made in coordination with state and local officials after a careful review of facility-level, community, and state

factors/orders. Additionally, state, and local officials should consider the following as a part of a comprehensive reopening plan:

- Case status in surrounding community
- Case status in the nursing home(s)
- Staffing levels
- Access to adequate testing for residents and staff
- Personal protective equipment supplies
- Local hospital capacity

These factors should help guide reopening decisions, and decisions related to creative ways to facilitate visitation. For example, a facility with multiple COVID-19 cases should still use caution when deciding to facilitate outdoor visitation. As facilities explore these options, they are still responsible for preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

The recent VDH guidance on re-opening Virginia Nursing Homes of 6/18/2020 can be found [here](#) and includes:

Consideration	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Visitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visitation is generally prohibited, except for compassionate care situations. In those limited situations, visitors are screened, and additional precautions are taken, including social distancing, and hand hygiene (e.g., use alcohol-based hand rub upon entry). All visitors must wear a cloth face covering or facemask for the duration of their visit. ▪ Types of visitation may continue under limited controlled conditions coordinated by the NH in consideration of social distancing and universal source control (e.g., window visits, outside visits). ▪ Limited visitation is at the discretion of each NH based on their temporary visitation policy and capacity for implementation. 		<p>Visitation is allowed with screening and additional precautions including ensuring social distancing and hand hygiene (e.g., use alcohol-based hand rub upon entry). All visitors must wear a cloth face covering or facemask for the duration of their visit.</p>

CHC will continue to monitor VDH guidance for any continued updates and will keep you informed.



Recent CHC Resources

CHC team has recently developed the COVID-19 resources listed below. Please contact Mary at mary@chileshealthcare.com if you desire to purchase any of these resources.

COVID-19 Infection Control Audit Tools Package	The package offers eight different audit tools designed for staff observation/competencies in infection control practices, resident and resident representative interviews, chart audits, facility infection control practices, etc.	\$150
COVID-19 Testing Plan	<p>This is a 10-page policy to address the requirements of having a comprehensive COVID-19 Testing Plan in place to enter Phase 1 of the Virginia guidance on “Re-Opening Nursing Homes”. While such plan is not required by Virginia DSS for assisted living facilities, many communities may desire to follow the same process as the nursing home. CHC recognizes and respects that you may need to modify this plan to be reflective of specific facility protocols and processes and we anticipate further updates and guidance may come from VDH, CMS or CDC. Future updates to this guide will be the responsibility of each nursing facility. The document includes the following areas of discussion based on current guidance from VDH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine screening of residents, staff, and visitors • Base line testing for residents and staff • Subsequent and Follow-Up Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequency ▪ Collaboration local health departments ▪ Utilization of contracted laboratories ▪ Specimen collection ▪ Financial implications ▪ Tracking screening and testing results • Resident and/or staff refusal for testing • Facility response to resident and staff test results, including staffing contingency plan 	\$ 135



Shifting Views of the Pandemic with a Growth Mindset

A growth mindset is a frame of mind where you are continually looking to learn something new or to grow as a person. A growth mindset takes challenges and sees opportunities as a way to grow. This mindset goes along with having a positive frame of mind and looking at your situation more positively.

The following questions may help in shifting your views of the pandemic: What potential good came from this crisis? Did you learn something new about yourself or others? Did you identify areas in which you plan to grow and redefine yourself? How will you focus your efforts going forward? These questions take some thought and self-reflection. However, reframing pandemic events can lead to self-growth and development that could make you more resilient in the future.



CHC will be sending another update the first of next week. There are a lot of moving parts and we are trying to keep current and sort out what is what