



GREATER NEW YORK HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ASSOCIATION

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Memo 23-22

To: Administrator, DNS, Medical Director, Infection Preventionist and QA Committee

**From: Mary Gracey-White RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance and
Arlette A Drigpaul, MSN RN Infection Preventionist/Education Coordinator**

Date: August 29, 2023

Re: Covid-19 Prevention and the Core Principles on Infection Prevention and Control

As you may have heard on news media outlets, there has been an **increase in Covid-19 infections and outbreaks** over the past several weeks. On August 25th the NYS Department of Health released **DAL 23-14** (found [here](#)) acknowledging this increase in Covid-19 cases in facilities as evidenced by data collected via the HERDS reports.

Given the upward trend of Covid-19 cases in facilities, it is important to **review and reinforce infection prevention and control measures** to support the highest levels of health and safety for residents, staff, and visitors.

Best practices to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and other infections include:

- Performing hand hygiene before and after contact with residents and their environment and when hands are visibly soiled;
 - Ensure there is an adequate supply of hand sanitizer for use and that sanitizers are easily accessible for residents, staff and visitors to use.
- Monitoring residents for signs/symptoms consistent with respiratory infections (e.g., Covid-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus);
- Prompt testing for respiratory diseases;
- Regular and increased cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, both inside and outside of resident care areas, with appropriate EPA-registered products;
- Prompt treatment and/or management of infections;
- Cohorting residents appropriately;
- Practicing recommended respiratory hygiene/etiquette;
- Posting signage on residents' room doors to indicate type of isolation precautions when applicable;
- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (e.g. gown, gloves, N95 masks, surgical/procedure masks, eye protection);
 - Use facemasks or face coverings as universal source control when indicated.

- Providing education and offering immunizations as applicable to ensure individuals are up-to-date with all recommended vaccines (both residents and staff);
- Tracking Covid 19 data to assist in implementing changes in Facility IC policies/procedures as needed utilizing appropriate metrics including [COVID-19 by County | CDC](#) and [COVID-19 Data in New York | Department of Health \(ny.gov\)](#);
- Staying home when sick (both staff and visitors);
- Posting visual alerts (e.g., signage and posters) at entrances and strategic places (e.g. lobby, elevators, cafeterias) that include instructions about current infection prevention and control recommendations (e.g., when to use source control and perform hand hygiene, staying home when sick)
- Posting signage in visible areas indicating type of outbreak and on which unit(s) facility is currently experiencing.
- Ensuring that there is an adequate supply of PPE for use (facilities are required to always keep a 60-day supply) and that PPE and Covid tests are not expired.
- Having an active respiratory protection program with fit testing for N95 mask to be done annually.
- With respect to Covid-19, you should request a Covid-19 test from the hospital prior to discharge to the post-acute care setting. Facility may also adopt a Covid-19 testing protocol for new and re-admissions, at their discretion, based on Covid-19 community transmission rates.

We have an updated sample Covid 19 Policy/Procedural guidance on our website and can assist facilities with support and education as needed. Please contact the Association if you have any questions.

Thank You,
 GNYHCFA Team