



## **GREATER NEW YORK HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ASSOCIATION**

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# **MEMO 22-01**

**TO: Administrator, DNS, Medical Director, Corporate Compliance Officer  
and QA Committee**

**FROM: Mary Gracey-White, Director of Regulatory Compliance & Arlette Drigpaul,  
Infection Preventionist**

**DATE: January 5, 2022**

**RE: COVID-19 – Return to Work**

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As you may be aware NYSDOH released two updated guidance documents; an updated Interim Advisory on return to Work for HCP and a DAL 21-30 to provide Nursing Homes with recommendations/review recommendations to follow during COVID-19 outbreaks. GNYHCFA will post updated P/P documents on our website to reflect any changes. Outlined below are key points relating to these updates:

### **HCP RETURN TO WORK 1/ 4 /22:**

- NYSDOH in addition to the 12/24/21 Advisory for HCP returning to work in critical staffing shortages has now aligned with the CDC guidance for staff returning to work during conventional and contingency staffing. We recommend you print and share the attached NYSDOH chart for key staff to refer to and review to determine your facility status and needs regarding staffing.
- Employees who have had a high-risk exposure and are fully vaccinated or recovered from SARS-CoV-2 infection in the prior 90 days, and are **asymptomatic**, do not require work restriction.
- As per NYSDOH a transition from conventional to contingency to crisis strategies should be based on ability to provide essential services, as determined by the facility. Facilities should notify NYSDOH if “crisis” strategies are required; individual staff waivers are no longer required. Until further direction is given, facilities should call the Surge and Flex Operations Center at 917-909- 2676 to notify NYSDOH of the need to move to “crisis” strategies

### **SNF DAL 21 -30 1/ 4/ 22:**

- The DAL is predominantly a reminder of facility Infection Prevention and Control actions to implement to prevent and/or contain Covid outbreaks. Listed below are key reminders:
  - Collaborate with the medical director and other clinicians
  - Maintain a 60-day PPE supply
  - Continue the Covid-19 vaccination program, including boosters
  - Continue screening of everyone who enters the building

- Encourage staff and visitors to stay home if they are sick
- Continue to assess residents' vital signs, including oxygen saturation
- Remain vigilant with cleaning and disinfection
- Continue to test residents who present with Covid-like symptoms and cohort as appropriate
- Review donning/doffing of PPE with staff
- Implement and/or continue daily meetings to communicate with and support staff
- Maintain ongoing communication with the Local Health Dept on the status of Covid-19 outbreaks and contact tracing
- NYS will be distributing non-surgical paper masks directly to all nursing homes, with deliveries beginning on January 6 and all deliveries anticipated to arrive by January 12. **These masks should be given to all visitors in place of cloth (woven fabric) masks upon entrance to the facility. If the visitor wishes, the cloth mask may be placed over the paper mask. We recommend you post signage at screening area and educate staff to provide these masks to visitors.**
- In addition, NYS will be providing **OTC home-based test kits** to assist with outbreak testing as well as visitor testing. Instructions for the iHealth OTC COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test, when testing a person who is asymptomatic, the asymptomatic person needs to be tested twice over three days with at least 24 hours (and no more than 48 hours) between tests. NYSDOH reinforces the need for strong tracking systems in place to monitor the frequency of testing and results obtained especially when testing asymptomatic individuals. In the case of visitor testing, a nursing home is allowed to provide a visitor with an iHealth OTC COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test **and the visitor may test themselves. The results of self- testing for visitors will not need to be reported to either ECLRS or to HERDS.**
- NYS has a supply of N95 masks which can be made available to nursing homes in need of this resource. Facilities in need should submit a request for N95 masks (specify make, model, size, and quantity) to their County Office of Emergency Management