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Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality  
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### Memorandum

**TO:** Licensees and Administrators of Licensed Long-Term Care Facilities in Barnstable County  
**FROM:** Elizabeth D. Kelley, MPH, MBA, Director  
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality  
**SUBJECT:** Additional Measures to Prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Transmission in Long-Term Care Facilities in Barnstable County  
**DATE:** July 19, 2021

This memorandum is to provide additional guidance to licensed long-term care facilities in Barnstable County on measures to prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) transmission in facilities due to a marked increase in new cases identified in the region in the past week.

#### Testing:

Long-term care facilities in Barnstable County must continue to perform surveillance testing on each staff person who is not fully vaccinated each week in accordance with the DPH Memorandum, Updates to Surveillance Testing issued on May 5, 2021:  
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/updates-to-long-term-care-surveillance-testing-0/download>

Additionally, long-term care facilities in Barnstable County must test any staff person who is not fully vaccinated using BinaxNOW tests upon arrival to the facility and prior to beginning to work each day or each shift. If a staff member is working consecutive shifts then they only need to be tested prior to beginning the first one.

Any staff member, regardless of vaccination status, must have a negative COVID-19 test prior to returning to work if they exhibited any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or called out of work due to illness. Long-term care facilities may use BinaxNOW testing to fulfill this requirement.

Any staff member returning from a planned absence or vacation must have a negative COVID-19 test prior to returning to work, regardless of vaccination status. Long-term care facilities may use BinaxNOW testing to fulfill this requirement.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

Long-term care facilities in Barnstable County must conduct an inventory of all of their PPE within the next forty-eight hours and contact DPH if they do not have at least two weeks' supply of alcohol-based hand rub, facemasks, gowns, gloves, N95 respirators that staff have been fit tested for use or eye protection then they should contact DPH at: [COVID19.resource.request@mass.gov](mailto:COVID19.resource.request@mass.gov) for additional supplies.

## **Visitation:**

All visitors to long-term care facilities in Barnstable County must wear masks for indoor visitation, regardless of vaccination status. The long-term care facility should issue the visitor a new mask and have them don it upon arrival.

Long-term care facilities must ensure they have adequate space to support outdoor visitation and encourage families to visit with their loved ones outdoors whenever possible.

## **Notice to Facility**

If the Department determines that a facility has not complied with the above obligations and the facility is at risk of uncontrolled transmission of COVID-19, the Department will issue a Notice to the facility ordering it to immediately cease admissions of any new residents, pursuant to COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Order No. 2021-1 (see Attachment H) and the Department's guidance on implementation (updated July 19, 2021).

The Notice will set out the conditions for the admissions freeze, and the conditions that must be met before the admissions freeze is lifted and the facility may resume accepting new residents. The admissions freeze will remain in effect until the Department has determined that the facility has corrected the conditions as specified in the Notice.

The issuance of a Notice to freeze admissions does not apply to a resident transferred from the facility to a hospital or other healthcare facility. When a long-term care facility resident is transferred from a long-term care facility to a hospital for evaluation of any condition, including but not limited to, COVID-19 care, the facility must accept the resident's return to the facility when the resident no longer requires hospital or other healthcare facility level of care, as long as the facility can provide care appropriate to the resident's needs, with appropriate infection control measures taken.

The Department may require the facility to accept support from Commonwealth sources, such as temporary staffing help, hiring support, infection control technical assistance from the Department, and managerial support through an identified vendor.

Unvaccinated admissions to LTC facilities should be quarantined upon admission to the facility for 14 days.

The Department appreciates the dedication to your residents, staff and families and action to implement these additional requirements. The enhanced infection control measures outlined in this guidance will remain in place until July 31, 2021 but may be extended depending on the number of cases, positivity level or any other factors the Department determines are appropriate.