

New Jersey Department of Health replies to questions from the
Home Care and Hospice Association of New Jersey – updated 3/31/20

- **Can the State expand COVID-19 testing to all residents and employees in any congregate setting (LTC, SNF, acute rehab, drug treatment centers, any residential hospice) when a resident is found to be positive for COVID-19?**
No. The State Health Department does not dictate nor recommend COVID-19 testing for all residents and employees in any congregate setting when a resident is found to be positive.
- **Our hospice contracts with a facility who wants to take all their hospice patients off service, so we don't go into the building. Did any of the regulations related to hospice discharge change as a result of the pandemic?**
No. Regulations related to hospice discharge have not changed, as a result of the pandemic.
- **What are the guidelines for an agency when a home health aide tests positive with COVID-19?**
The risk of exposure to COVID-19 is higher if neither the aid nor patient were using appropriate PPE during interaction.
If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, in general, the employee may stop home isolation 7 days after they first developed symptoms AND 72 hours (3 days) after the fever has ended, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and symptoms have significantly improved (whichever period is longer).
 - **Who is responsible of notifying the patient?**
It is the responsibility of the agency employing the aid, to notify the patient that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19. If the agency believes patients may have been exposed to COVID-19, the agency should take the steps necessary to assess the risk to patients and provide patient notification where indicated and notify them as appropriate. Please see the New Jersey Department of Health risk assessment guidance:
https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_healthcare.shtml
 - **What precaution should the senior building or residence take?**
Precaution guidance can be located on the CDC website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/infection-prevention-control-faq.html>
The CDC website should be checked frequently for updated guidance.
 - **In what period can a new home health aide be reassigned?**
A new home health aide can be reassigned as soon as Rx., using appropriate PPE.

New Jersey Department of Health replies to questions from the
Home Care and Hospice Association of New Jersey – updated 3/31/20

- **What guideline should we be using for employee call outs due to cold/flu symptoms? If the employee calls out due to a cold/flu, for example: If an employee calls out sick, even if it's for a day, should they be bringing in a doctor's note upon returning to work?**
Guidelines to be followed, if an employee calls out of work due to cold/flu symptoms, is driven by agency policy.
- **Our company is based in NY where the agency can call county health departments and find out if a client being admitted is on the Quarantine List before visiting to admit a client to service. Is there a list such as that in NJ and, if so, how do we connect to it?**
At the present time there is no Quarantine List in the state of New Jersey, listing individuals as quarantined.
- **How are we to serve our patients when facilities continue to restrict our staff from visiting?**
The agency must work directly with the facility regarding this issue. The Department will be issuing guidance to LTC facilities, in the near future, regarding the restriction of visitation.
- **How do we care for patients in a facility where 60% of our patients have tested positive and we have exhausted all of our staff who covered that facility, due to exposure (the entire IDG)?**
The Department is not in a position to assist with staffing. Please examine other staffing resources.