

**CMH Long-Term Care Facility COVID-19 Updates:
Colonial Springs Health Care Center
Week Ending Feb. 27, 2021**

We implemented our infection prevention and control policies and procedures before the national mandate in March, as we felt this was key to preventing coronavirus and other common viruses. There are over 300 facilities in the state of Missouri that have had one or more residents or staff with positive cases.

CMS has implemented required surveillance testing of employees in long-term care based on their county's COVID-19 positivity rate. This surveillance testing is not due to positive cases at our facility, but to CMS requirements. Facilities will be discontinuing random employee testing due to the surveillance testing. If the facility has a positive employee or resident, mass testing will supersede the scheduled surveillance testing. Colonial Springs Healthcare Center will be testing employees once a month.

Colonial Springs Healthcare Center currently has zero active employee cases and zero resident cases. The facility has transitioned to routine testing.

Our goal is to ensure that our staff and residents are practicing proper hand hygiene and following proper cough and sneeze etiquette. We have trained Infection Preventionist nurses in all of our long-term care facilities overseeing all related protocols. We are following direction from the federal/state government, which requires that employees who are sick must stay home and that nonessential personnel be restricted from entering our facilities for the time being. We are in very close communication with local and state health officials to ensure we are taking the appropriate steps. CMH LTC facilities implemented testing and screening in early March and have updated this over time to include pre-shift and mid-shift screenings of all staff to assure early detection of potential issues. Residents are also screened daily, including a COVID-19 Assessment to monitor for signs and symptoms of potential issues. As a part of this screening process residents are encouraged to wear a face mask or face shield provided by the facility. They may choose to accept or decline.

Resident safety is a top priority for all CMH LTC facilities. Every resident should have a clean, safe living environment. We agree that the spread of this novel virus is a critical issue that requires our full attention. Our goal is to try and keep the virus out and if it is found in the facility, to minimize the spread to anyone else. Additional training and communication to our staff has been completed and housekeeping processes have been updated to meet current guidelines.

During this time we have been in constant contact with our local and state health departments, as well as continually monitor guidance from the state and federal government, to stay up to date on the information to prevent and manage the spread of Coronavirus. We have a Health Care Command Center meeting on a frequent basis that provides updates and communications from a variety of health care professionals and specialist. Being a part of a larger health care system has allowed us to be able to have these resources available.

We also rely on local, state and federal resources to help prevent the spread of this virus, and we appreciate everything they're doing at this time. We have reviewed and updated our infection prevention and control plans and our emergency communication plan.

We have reinforced to our staff that anyone who is sick should stay home. We are following the updated infection prevention procedures like those used during flu season: including handwashing, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, covering coughs and disinfecting the environment. Vendors are not allowed to enter the facility and all items are delivered to the facility and are sanitized before being

brought into the facility. This includes all pharmacy and mail deliveries and any other packages for the residents or staff.

We are requiring all employees to wear face masks along with either face shields or safety goggles/glasses while at work.

We are following guidance from the state and federal government that restricts nonessential individuals, including family members, contractors, and volunteers from visiting our facility for the time being. We will make accommodations for family members whose loved one is near end-of-life; however, it is critical that we do all that we can to protect our residents and patients from this virus. If your loved one is on hospice or in an end of life situation, please contact the facility Social Services Director or Director of Nursing for additional information on visitation processes.

We have received the “green light” to resume, indoor, outdoor and open window visits. Indoor and outdoor visits are by appointment only and determined by availability of times and staffing to provide screening and supervision.

Please read the visitation rules <https://bit.ly/3ezaxNC> for a refresher on visitor expectations including masking and social distancing. We want to continue keeping everyone safe; visits are subject to cancellation during severe weather including heat advisories.

Thank you in advance for being kind to our screening staff that help coordinate the visits. We can't wait to see you again. Call 417-326-3000 to schedule a visit with your resident.

Citizens Memorial Health Care Foundation owns and operates our facilities and is taking preventative measures to minimize the risk of coronavirus exposures to our residents and staff. Family and friends are encouraged to stay connected to residents by using Skype, FaceTime, phone calls and email and following our social media pages.

We have implemented enhanced virtual visits with providers and specialist. Our goal is to limit the number of outside contacts and potential exposures to COVID-19. We will coordinate provider visits and procedures on a case by case basis. These are based on clinical indications, resident choice and provider input. Additional caution is made to assure transportation and external exposure is minimized. Residents wear masks and transportation is limited to CMH transit to allow for proper disinfecting and following all needed precautions. Residents change clothes once returning from an outside exposure and are then quarantined to their room for 14 days following the event.

We have restricted and revamped group activities within our facilities to help reduce the potential spread, including social distancing, enhanced sanitation and disinfecting and not allowing common touch points for items needed for activities. For activities in the dining room, residents are limited implemented weather permitting and proper social distancing has been encouraged.

All responsible parties were contacted or attempted to contact were provided with a status update. In order to assure we are communicating as quick and often as needed we want to assure responsible parties have given us the most current emergency contact information for themselves including email addresses, so we can continue to keep them informed should there be any new developments. The responsible party will be responsible for providing individual updates regarding the status of their resident to family and friends. Residents have the right to determine who and when information is provided.

The following are some common questions that we have been asked during this pandemic:

Should families who are worried move their loved ones out of skilled nursing facilities or assisted living communities?

No. Moving the elderly or frail is risky and often can cause other complications that have long lasting impacts. Research around moving residents out of buildings because of natural disasters and other emergency events has proven this over time. CDC does not currently recommend transferring residents either home or to the hospital.

How concerned are you for skilled nursing facility or assisted living residents?

We know that the frail and elderly are very susceptible to this virus. That's why we are following the government's guidance to restrict visitors, asking employees to stay home when ill, and we stay in close communication with our local health department, DHSS, CDC and CMS to ensure we have the latest information and resources available.

Are we having trouble getting supplies like masks and gowns?

We have heard that some long-term care providers are having some of the same difficulties as other health care providers getting masks and gowns. In our facilities, we currently have enough for our normal operations and our current processes for non COVID positive processes. Suppliers have been asking that everyone be on an "allocation" of what their typical orders have been for the same time period in previous years. This can cause issues as this pandemic has created a greater usage of PPEs, especially masks. We currently have plenty of medical grade masks and have cloth masks available for any resident that would like these for their own use. We also have the advantage of being a part of a larger health care system that provides us with opportunities to procure additional resources when needed from our central materials management inventories. If you are interested in donating masks or other PPEs, let your facility DON or Administrator know.

If staff have to stay home because they are sick/schools close, how are you ensuring that there are enough staff to care for your residents?

Our state and national associations are encouraging both federal and state governments to waive current licensing requirements that would hinder care professionals from working across state lines, so we can potentially address any shortages due to employees needing to stay home. Fortunately we are not experiencing shortages at this time and have utilized our float pool from areas of the organization not seeing patients to supplement our staffing levels. Once again being a part of a larger system gives us access to additional human resources and staffing options.

Our state and national associations are also advocating for priority testing for our employees and residents, so we can quickly identify whether staff need to remain at home or if they can come back to work. We have tested staff and residents who have met criteria in several of our facilities over the last several weeks. Thankfully, all of these have been negative to this point.

Testing residents and staff for COVID-19 in long-term care is becoming an increasingly important focus. The American Health Care Association/National Centers for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) along with the CDC are providing guidance on testing in long-term care facilities.

CMH Foundation long-term care facilities, including this one, will now be testing all new admissions/readmissions into the facility. Each admission/readmission will be tested a second time within 7 to 10 days of the original test. We will also be testing all new employees to long-term care. While the increase in testing in our facility may cause the public to be alarmed, rest assured this is an important addition to other infection prevention and control recommendations aimed at keeping COVID-19 out of our facilities, detecting any future cases quickly and stopping transmission.

The number of residents requiring testing to this point since Jan. 1, 2020, has been 3,114. Thus far 4,033 staff members have been tested. Thus far 51 visitors and 35 vendors have been tested. To date, 7,035 results have been negative for COVID-19 and 145 tests have been positive. Colonial Springs Healthcare Center currently has zero active employee cases and zero resident cases. The facility has transitioned to routine testing.

We clarified and provided additional education to staff regarding quarantine precautions. We also developed signage to be placed on quarantined resident doors to remind staff and residents of expectations.

Our ultimate goal is to decrease the risk of viral outbreaks in our long-term care facilities. In order to do this, two processes need to be in place. First, efforts should continue to focus on how to decrease the introduction of viruses into a facility. Second, steps to decrease the spread of a virus between residents need to be in place and followed consistently. Even then, outbreaks may still occur. Facilities should have a process to limit the spread of a virus and also treat individuals with an infection to decrease the risk of illness exacerbation, hospitalization and in severe cases, death. The steps that we have used thus far to help prevent the introduction of a virus into our long-term care facilities include: Limiting all nonessential visitors from entering the facility, including family, volunteers and contractors and requiring individuals visiting a facility to wear a mask when viral infections are at increased levels in the community. Encouraging frequent hand hygiene by making alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers readily available, in locations such as in or near each resident's room as well as in the entry area and common areas.

Steps to help decrease the risk of viral spread within a facility include: Regular and frequent internal monitoring systems of hand hygiene with regular feedback to staff and administration. Visual and verbal reminders that hand hygiene helps residents stay healthy have been provided to staff and residents alike.

Staff use personal protective equipment for droplet protection. Universal masking began the beginning of April and has been in place ever since. Staff use appropriate cleaning products on surfaces that are cytotoxic for common viral infections and change these cleaning products when the harder to kill infectious agents are identified and require special cleaning products, such as C. diff, norovirus and adenovirus, which are readily available to the facility staff.

CMS issued updated infection control regulations for nursing homes in November 2016. These regulations were designed to help decrease the risk of infectious outbreaks in nursing facilities and require each nursing facility to have an infection control plan that must describe: An infection prevention and control program. The facility must establish an infection prevention and control program that includes an Antibiotic Stewardship Program and designate at least one Infection Preventionist. Facilities developed a system of surveillance designed to identify possible communicable diseases or infections before they can spread to other persons in the facility. The plan includes when and to whom possible incidents of communicable disease or infections should be reported. Standard and transmission-based precautions to be followed to prevent spread of infections. When and how isolation should be used for a resident; including but not limited to: the type and duration of the isolation, depending upon the infectious agent or organism involved, and a requirement that the isolation should be the least restrictive possible for the resident under the circumstances.

The plan includes the circumstances under which the facility must prohibit employees with a communicable disease or infected skin lesions from direct contact with residents or their food, if direct contact will transmit the disease. The hand hygiene procedures to be followed by staff involved in direct resident contact. The CMS regulations also require each nursing facility to designate at least

one employee to serve as an Infection Preventionist, who is both a clinician Registered or Licensed Nurse and has received additional training and certification in infection control. The Infection Preventionist for this facility is Christine Legg, RN, and the Director of Nursing is Jessica Rogers, RN.