

# Hospice and Palliative Care Resources for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



## NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 02/17/21

NHPCO has created this update for hospice and palliative care providers to share recent news and helpful links. Please note, these Updates are published when there is helpful news to share.

*“There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something better tomorrow.” — Orison Swett Marden*

### Policy Update

#### **Visitation at Intermediate Care Facilities**

CMS is issuing new [guidance for visitation in intermediate care facilities](#) for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IIDs) and psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs) during the COVID-19 PHE. The guidance provides ways an ICF/IID and PRTF can more safely facilitate in-person visitation and address the psychosocial needs of clients/residents.

### Provider Updates

#### **Updated Guidance from CDC for Healthcare Personnel**

- **Staff Shortages:** This [staff shortage guidance](#) is for healthcare facilities that may be experiencing staffing shortages due to COVID-19. Updates to this guidance include: As contingency strategies options to allow: Asymptomatic HCP who have had a higher-risk exposure but are not known to be infected to shorten their duration of work restriction as described in [Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#) Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing; and Asymptomatic fully vaccinated HCP who have had a higher-risk exposure to SARS-CoV-2 but are not known to be infected.
- **Testing Healthcare Personnel:** CDC updated their guidance on [testing healthcare personnel](#). Updates to the guidance include: Addition of a recommendation from the [CDC Decision Memo](#) that asymptomatic people who have recovered from SARS-CoV-2 infection may not need to undergo repeat testing or quarantine in the case of another SARS-CoV-2 exposure within 3 months of their initial diagnosis.
- **Potential Exposure at Work:** This interim guidance is intended to assist with [assessment of risk and application of work restrictions](#) for asymptomatic healthcare personnel with potential exposure to patients, visitors, or other HCP with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection. Updates to the guidance include: Clarification that work exclusion of asymptomatic HCP with a higher-risk exposure who have recovered from SARS-CoV-2 infection in the prior 3 months might not be necessary. Additional information about this scenario is [available on the CDC website](#).
- **Return-to-Work Criteria:** This guidance is for occupational health programs and public health officials [making decisions about return to work](#) for HCP with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, or who have suspected SARS-CoV-2 infection. Updates to this guidance include: Changes to more closely align guidance with updates to the [Decision Memo](#).

- **Discharging COVID-19 Patients:** This guidance is for infection control personnel making decisions about when to [discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions for patients](#) with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection. Decisions about discontinuing Transmission-Based Precautions for patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection should be made in the context of local circumstances. The time period used depends on the patient's severity of illness and if they are severely immunocompromised.
- **Clinical Care Guidance:** This document provides [guidance on caring for patients infected with COVID-19](#). The recommendations are based on scientific evidence and expert opinion and are regularly updated as more data become available. Updates to this guidance include: New information on potential for under-detection of occult hypoxemia by pulse oximetry, especially among persons with dark skin; dermatologic manifestations; prolonged shedding of replication-competent SARS-CoV-2 in severely immunocompromised persons; and more.
- **Updated Guide for Essential Workers:** In some states, [essential workers](#) already have access to vaccines to help protect them against COVID-19. These vaccines will be available to essential workers across the nation soon. CDC has provided a toolkit to help employers educate their essential workers about this important new prevention tool.

### **Seven Variants Similar to UK Type Detected in U.S.**

A new study on [MedRxiv.org](#) found seven variants of the COVID-19 virus have been detected in the U.S., and all or some of them may contain mutations similar to the qualities exhibited by a strain of extra-contagious COVID-19 spreading in the United Kingdom. Learn more in an article from [The Hill](#) (02/15/21).

## **Resources**

### **The Johns Hopkins 30-Minute COVID-19 Briefing**

Join experts from the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center (CRC) on Fridays for timely, accessible updates on the state of the pandemic and the public health response. The briefings and recordings are [available online](#).

### **Resources from CAPC**

CAPC's COVID-19 rapid response resources are available at your fingertips through our [mobile-friendly website](#). These tools and technical assistance remain free and open to all during the pandemic and can be accessed on any device.

### **New Book Forecasts Grim Grief Outcomes for Bereaved**

Hospice Foundation of America (HFA) announced the publication of *Living with Grief Since COVID-19*, a groundbreaking volume written by survivors of COVID-19 and healthcare and grief professionals working in the pandemic environment. [Learn more](#) about this publication.

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