

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



### NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 09/18/20

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.

*"When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on."*

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

### Policy Update

#### **NHPCO Requests Money and Equipment for COVID-19 Testing**

On September 15, [NHPCO sent a letter to HHS Secretary Alex Azar](#) (PDF) requesting \$500 million in funding for hospices to do testing, along with requests for testing equipment and testing supplies. This letter is NHPCO's second request to the Administration to provide COVID-19 testing equipment and supplies for hospice providers. NHPCO's efforts have been reported in the media, read "[NHPCO to HHS: Hospices Need Aid for COVID Testing](#)," in *Hospice News*.

#### **New Guidelines for Nursing Home Visitation**

CMS has released [new guidelines for nursing home visitation](#), available on the CMS website. The new guidance recommends nursing homes plan outdoor visits as much as possible because the risk for transmission is lower in open air settings. The agency also will allow facilities to apply for up to \$3,000 in civil monetary penalty funds to purchase tents or clear dividers for outdoor visitation.

The guidance permits indoor visitation if a facility has not had a new onset of COVID-19 cases in the past 14 days, if the site is not conducting outbreak testing and if the county positivity rate isn't above 10%. The number of visitors and movement in the facility should be limited, and visitors should be confined to a visitation room or a resident's room, if the resident does not have a roommate. The Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes released their final report on Thursday, September 17. They recommended that visitation be considered a resident's right.

Compassionate care visits, such as visits at the end of life or residents grieving the death of a loved one or experiencing physical or emotional distress, are not impacted by the visitation restrictions.

#### **CMS Releases Final Report from the Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes**

On Thursday, September 17, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services [received the final report](#) from the independent Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes (Commission), which was facilitated by MITRE. CMS also released an overview of the robust public health actions the agency has taken to date to combat the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in nursing homes.

The Commission’s findings align with the actions the Trump Administration and CMS have taken to contain the spread of the virus and to safeguard nursing home residents from the ongoing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today’s announcement delivers on the Administration’s commitments to keeping nursing home residents safe and to transparency for the American people in the face of this unprecedented pandemic. CMS also released a [side-by-side summary](#) of the federal response to COVID-19 in nursing homes compared to the commission findings.

## **Resources**

### **Update Guidance – Who Should be Tested for COVID-19 (9/18/20)**

The [CDC reversed guidance](#) it issued last month about who should be tested for the novel coronavirus. The agency updated its recommendation on Sep 18, 2020 to call for testing anyone — including people without symptoms — who has been in close contact with someone diagnosed with covid-19, the disease caused by the virus.

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