

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 09/09/20

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.

“Surprise yourself every day with your own courage.” — Denholm Elliott

Policy Update

Banach Op-ed on Hospice Respite Care Relief Act

An opinion article by Edo Banach, "[Hospice respite flexibility is recipe for more patient protection](#)," was published yesterday by Healthcare Dive. The article looks at the importance of the COVID-19 Hospice Respite Care Relief Act of 2020, introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown and Senator Shelly Moore Capito. Healthcare Dive is an online news source that provides in-depth journalism and insight into the most impactful news and trends shaping healthcare.

NHPCO Meets with CMS with Nursing Home Testing Questions

On Wednesday September 9, NHPCO met with CMS to discuss the [Interim Final Rule](#) and the accompanying CMS guidance for nursing homes who are required to conduct testing for staff and residents in nursing homes. The definition of “staff” includes any individuals that have arrangements to provide services for the facility, such as hospice workers. NHPCO provided questions from hospice providers on the testing requirement, frequency of testing, test results and payment for testing. Discussions with CMS staff will continue. Frequency of testing is described in the [CMS guidance, QSO 20-38-NH](#), as follows:

Table 2: Routine Testing Intervals Vary by Community COVID-19 Activity Level

Community COVID-19 Activity	County Positivity Rate in the past week	Minimum Testing Frequency
Low	<5%	Once a month
Medium	5% - 10%	Once a week*
High	>10%	Twice a week*

*This frequency presumes availability of Point of Care testing on-site at the nursing home or where off-site testing turnaround time is <48 hours.

Provider Update

CDC COVID Testing Data Tracker

CDC updated their interactive COVID-19 testing data tracker on their website. The [CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker](#) has a new look and location to make the data easier to find and use. All previous data remains and will be updated on the same schedule. Also, as of August 27, 2020 the Tracker includes correctional facility information, NIH Vulnerability Index data, and upgraded testing information.

Interim Guidance for Rapid Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2

Proper interpretation of antigen test results is important for accurate clinical management of patients with suspected COVID-19. CDC updated guidance can help healthcare providers [make the most effective use of antigen tests](#) in different situations.

Resources

Multiple Languages for COVID-19 Consumer Updates

The FDA's COVID-19-related consumer [updates](#) are now available in at least five languages.

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