COVID-19 Guidance for Long-Term Care Facilities

COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread around the world. Cases and deaths in Washington are increasing. The virus spreads through airborne droplets. Symptoms are flu-like, including cough, fever and shortness of breath. Symptoms generally develop 2 to 14 days after exposure. Most illnesses are mild, but these people are at increased risk for severe illness:

- Over age 60.
- Underlying health conditions.
- Pregnant.

Hospitals may discharge patients with COVID-19 to long-term care facilities.

Keep these patients under standard, contact and droplet precautions until they have 2 negative swab results at least 24 hours apart.

If you have questions or concerns about performing swab tests, call the Health Department at (253) 798-6410.

Take these steps to prevent infection.

- Minimize chances for exposure before admission, upon arrival and during admission.
- Notify the Health Department of any cluster of respiratory illness in patients and/or staff. Call (253) 798-6410.
- If influenza test is negative, consider testing for COVID-19.
- Use standard, contact and droplet precautions and eye protection.
- Add airborne precautions when performing aerosolizing procedures likely to induce coughing, like CPR, intubation, suctioning, nebulizer treatment or specimen collection.
- Place signs on the door of COVID-19 patient rooms.
- Consider implementing strategies to preserve PPE.
- Frequently use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wash visibly soiled hands with soap and water.
- Manage visitor access and movement within the facility.
- Implement engineering controls.
- Monitor and manage sick healthcare workers.
- Monitor patients and staff for signs of illness. Immediately notify infection control of concerns.
- Train and educate staff.
- Implement environmental infection control.
- Communicate with healthcare and public health systems.

Review your outbreak management plan and establish internal processes.

These resources can help:

- Directions for long-term care facilities—Washington State Department of Health.
- Control and prevention guidance—Occupational Safety and Health Administration.