

Home Health and Staffing Agencies: How to stay safe while providing care at home, ICF and ALF

Ensuring the health and safety of all persons and maintaining their highest level of well-being is our collective health care goal. In light of the recent spread of COVID-19, CMS and others are providing additional guidance to help control and prevent the spread of the virus. Key resources for **assisted living** and **other living facilities, home health services, and at-home care for individuals/families** are listed here.

Assisted Living Facilities and other Nursing Care/Living Facilities - Revised Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus in nursing homes from CMS found at <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfopolicy-and/guidance-infection-control-and-prevention-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-nursing-homes-revised>

Key strategies

- visitor restriction
- caregiver screening prior to entering
- cancellation of all group setting activities
- practicing social distancing
- promoting frequent hand hygiene

Efforts should be made to increased phone and virtual contact with persons in facilities where these limitations reduce their socialization opportunities. Plans should be made with EMS providers about revised processes for moving patients in or out of the facility. Agency and other staff who typically move from one facility to another should have limited mobility among facilities if possible.

Resources specific to the care of dementia patients in assisted living are provided by the Alzheimer's Association and can be accessed at [https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-tips-for-dementia-care](https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-(covid-19)-tips-for-dementia-care)

Home Health Services - Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention Concerning Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Home Health Agencies (HA's) can be found at <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfopolicy-and/guidance-infection-control-and-prevention-concerning-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-home-health>

Key strategies

- following infection prevention and control practices from the CDC

- not providing care when the health care provider has signs and symptoms of respiratory illness

Additional resources provided by the National Association for Home Care and Hospice may be found at <https://www.nahc.org/resources-services/coronavirus-resources/>

Resources specific to the care of dementia patients in the home are provided by the Alzheimer's Association and can be accessed at [https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-tips-for-dementia-care](https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-(covid-19)-tips-for-dementia-care)

At-home care for families and people with COVID-19 – Information is posted at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>

Key strategies

- People should adhere to home isolation until the risk of secondary transmission is thought to be low
- Use of a separate bedroom where the patient can recover without sharing immediate space with others
- The patient and other household members have access to appropriate, recommended personal protective equipment (at a minimum, gloves and facemask) and are capable of adhering to precautions recommended as part of home care or isolation (e.g., respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, hand hygiene)

Resources specific to the care of dementia patients at home are provided by the Alzheimer's Association and can be accessed at [https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-tips-for-dementia-care](https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-(covid-19)-tips-for-dementia-care)

Staffing agencies will be taxed to provide care and services to many clients during this COVID-19 public health emergency.

Some of the tips and resources below may be helpful.

- Be certain that all staff are educated to provide infection prevention and control procedures
- Minimize locations of care where each care provider is assigned to reduce community exposure to patient especially in long-term care
- Follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines as posted at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html>
- Follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines which can be found at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>
- Advise clients of the steps you're taking to implement the CDC guidance

- If temporary employees show up sick, the client should apply the same policies and restrictions that apply to the client's employees
- Staffing firms should develop non-punitive leave policies
- Follow OSHA guidelines to record and report COVID-19 cases

Clients should be informed of any staffing firm restrictions on employees who have recently been in countries subject to government travel advisories. Work restrictions on employees or job applicants who have traveled to affected countries may be justified.

The American Staffing Association offers a variety of resources at <https://americanstaffing.net/coronavirus/>, including a **model staffing agency agreement**.

Return to work information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/hcp-return-work.html>

The following **article** regarding increasing demand for clinicians and support staff may also be of interest <https://www.modernhealthcare.com/providers/demand-clinicians-support-staff-grows-covid-19-spreads>

Information about the **paid leave mandate** that was passed by the U.S. House and is pending approval by the U. S. Senate may be accessed at <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/senate-to-vote-soon-on-coronavirus-paid-leave-mandate.aspx>

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