

ISDH Long Term Care Newsletter
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Today's Issue:

- **COVID-19 Active Infection Survey of Indiana Nursing Facility Staff**

On May 18, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a [memo for state and local officials regarding nursing home reopening recommendations which includes access to adequate testing for residents and staff. \(QSO-20-30-NH\)](#). COVID-19 has had a disproportionate effect on residents and staff at long-term care facilities. The congregate nature of these facilities, the medical vulnerabilities of the residents, and the asymptomatic spread of the virus among staff have contributed to long-term care deaths making up nearly 50 percent of deaths in the state.

Decreasing outbreaks in facilities and subsequent deaths will require continued attention to infection control practices and the reduction of asymptomatic viral transmission. Testing is a key component in reducing asymptomatic viral spread. For testing to be most effective, staff in long-term care facilities may need to undergo COVID-19 testing at regularly scheduled intervals. How frequent testing needs to occur and whether all staff in all facilities require the same testing frequency is unknown. Furthermore, the barriers to testing all long-term care staff are not fully known.

To address these important questions, Indiana will help facilitate COVID-19 testing of all skilled nursing home staff in June to identify the prevalence of asymptomatic staff in these facilities. This effort does not include residential care facilities or assisted living. This data, combined with other datasets, discussions with stakeholders, and qualitative interviews with front-line staff about testing, will be used to inform future guidance.

For this testing effort in June 2020 to be an effective indicator for future decision-making, it is imperative that all skilled nursing facilities and all staff within those facilities participate in this testing. Therefore, ISDH is mandating participation in this COVID-19 testing during the month of June. In an effort to minimize initial impact on nursing facilities, ISDH is partnering with the Indiana National Guard and OptumHealth to provide this testing free of charge to all skilled nursing facility staff and other contract workers/vendors who are in the facility.

Method: Beginning June 15, in partnership with OptumHealth, ISDH will work with skilled

nursing facilities to have all staff in those facilities tested. ISDH will either provide test kits to skilled nursing facilities or schedule time with the facility for an OptumHealth team to test all facility staff.

Complete Information & Frequently Asked Questions: [COVID-19 Active Infection Survey of Indiana Nursing Facility Staff](#)