



Indiana
Department
of
Health

Long-term Care NEWSLETTER

LTC Newsletter 2021-31
June 25, 2021

CMS Update:

- **QSO-20-41-ALL—REVISED 06.21.2021 – Guidance related to Emergency Preparedness – *Exercise Exemption Based on a Facility’s Activation of Their Emergency Plan***
- **QSO-21-19-NH—05.11.2021 – Interim Final Rule – COVID-19 Vaccine Immunization Requirements for Residents & Staff—**REMINDER****

LTC Update:

- **Benefits for Fully Vaccinated—Staff, Residents, Visitors & Updates to LTC Guidance**
 - **COVID-19 LTC Facility Infection Control Guidance Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)—Updated 06.22.2021**
 - **Long-term Care Facilities Guidelines in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination — Updated 06.22.2021**
 - **Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)—Signage**

CMS Update:

QSO-20-41-ALL—REVISED 06.21.2021 – Guidance related to Emergency Preparedness – *Exercise Exemption Based on a Facility’s Activation of Their Emergency Plan*

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations for Emergency Preparedness (EP) requires facilities to conduct exercises to test their EP plan to ensure that it works, and that staff are trained appropriately about their roles and the facility’s processes. During or after an actual

emergency, the regulations allow for a one-year exemption from the requirement that the facility perform testing exercises.

As the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) continues, many facilities continue to operate under their respective activated emergency plans. Therefore, CMS is providing additional guidance related to the exercise requirements for inpatient providers / suppliers. This exemption applies only to the next required full-scale exercise (not the exercise of choice), based on the facility's 12-month exercise cycle.

Complete Information: [QSO-20-41-ALL REVISED 06.21.2021 - Guidance related to Emergency Preparedness- Exercise Exemption Based on a Facility's Activation of their Emergency Plan](#)

QSO-21-19-NH—05.11.2021 – Interim Final Rule – COVID-19 Vaccine Immunization Requirements for Residents & Staff—REMINDER

As a reminder, CMS Memo QSO-21-19-NH, informed SNF/NF facilities of the requirement for facilities to report COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutics treatment information to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) by June 13, 2021 and weekly thereafter. Facilities found to not have reported all the required elements will be cited at F884 at a scope and severity level of F (no actual harm with a potential for more than minimal harm that is not Immediate Jeopardy [IJ] that is widespread). A civil money penalty will be imposed by CMS.

Complete Information: [QSO-21-19-NH – 05.11.2021 – Interim Final Rule – COVID-19 Vaccine Immunization Requirements for Residents and Staff](#)

LTC Update:

Benefits for Fully Vaccinated—Staff, Residents, Visitors & Updates to LTC Guidance

Fully vaccinated HCP/staff perks:

- May choose to not wear eye protection in green/ yellow zones (for monitoring new admissions) – irrespective of county positivity rate
 - Must keep eye protection for symptomatic or positive COVID-19 resident in red/yellow zone in TBP
- Unmask during one-on-one resident care with fully vaccinated residents unless undergoing aerosol generating procedure
 - Must keep mask on if visitors are present

- Must keep mask on if other HCPs enter the room who are unvaccinated
- Must re-mask in hallways and common areas
- Outdoor activities – vaccinated staff may unmask
- May use a fan at the nurse’s stations if all staff are fully vaccinated, pointing the fan upward and away from other people or to a ceiling or a window. **Note:** If a resident comes near the nurse’s station, HCP should put on a face mask. [CDC Reference](#)

Changes to resident fully vaccinated guidance:

- Two or more vaccinated residents may be in the salon together if they remain masked and adequate social distancing is possible. Hair dryers do pose a risk for blowing droplets/aerosols, so masks are recommended.
- Singing updates – Added updates for fully vaccinated residents if they choose to not mask when singing in church, recommend masks for all if singing indoors, and option to move outdoors for any activity for singing is still preferred. [CDC Reference](#)

HCP and visitor screening updates based on Tiers 1 for low community positivity and 75% or more vaccination status, Tier 2 for moderate/high community positivity and/or < 75% vaccination status: Screening should occur based on the following risk assessment:

- **Tier 1**—Low county positivity rates $\leq 5\%$ **and** resident and LTC staff vaccination status $\geq 75\%$
 - Signage at entrances indicating “Respiratory/ Cough Etiquette” and “CDC current COVID-19 Symptoms” should be posted. (See COVID [symptoms of COVID-19](#))
 - Self-screening for visitors and staff may be by COVID-19 screening paper forms or kiosk screening for every entrance to the facility in a calendar day.
 - Screening questions ask about being afebrile in last 24 hours (temperatures are not required to be physically taken).
- **Tier 2**—Moderate/high county positivity rates $> 5\%$ **and/or** resident and LTC staff vaccination status $< 75\%$
 - Signage at entrances indicating Respiratory/ Cough Etiquette and COVID Symptoms
 - Active monitoring of visitors and staff with COVID-19 screening by use of non-licensed personnel to be present
 - Screening includes physically taking temperatures for *HCP (* temperature checks are required as unvaccinated HCP are highest risk for transmission with $< 75\%$ vaccination rates). See [CDC Screening for HCP Guidance in Nursing Homes](#).

A visitor re-entering the facility within the same calendar day does not need to be rescreened.

- **Daily COVID-19 checks –**
 - Unvaccinated residents require once daily assessment for COVID-19.
 - Residents with symptomatic COVID-19 require three-times-per-day assessment for COVID-19.
 - Fully vaccinated residents' assessment can be limited to whether they have symptoms for COVID-19.
 - Screen all nursing home residents or residential facility residents who are not fully functional or have dementia in person.
 - Residential facilities' fully functional and non-dementia patients: screening by phone is acceptable, but screen at least once a week in person.
 - Symptomatic resident from any location: do comprehensive evaluation.
 - Examination frequency can be decreased to pre-pandemic levels if asymptomatic.

These documents have been updated 06.22.2021:

- [COVID-19 LTC Facility Infection Control Guidance Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\)](#) – Updated 06.22.2021
- [Long-term Care Facilities Guidelines in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination](#) – Updated 06.22.2021
- Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)—Signage – Use at facility entrances in Tier 1 new guidance – page 4
 - [Symptoms of Coronavirus \(COVID 19\)—English](#)
 - [Síntomas del coronavirus \(COVID-19\)—Spanish](#)