

# UPDATE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Stay informed. Take precautions. Stay safe.

Dear Members,

Please see the message from Secretary Chen and updated guidance on the program for COVID-19 testing below.

### ***A note on behalf of Secretary Chen***

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Dear Nursing Home, Rest Home, and Assisted Living Residence Colleagues,

The attached document serves as updated guidance on the program for COVID-19 testing in Nursing Homes, Rest Homes and Assisted Living Residences (Facilities). The attached guidance supplements guidance issued on April 9, 2020.

This guidance provides (1) further detail on the protocol for testing an entire facility (including symptomatic and asymptomatic residents and employees) and (2) notification of the state's new partnership with Fallon EMS for in-facility testing (supplementing the MA National Guard).

We look forward to your cooperation in this critical endeavor and we thank you in advance for your help. For any questions please contact Ed Taglieri at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, at [Edmund.Taglieri@MassMail.State.MA.US](mailto:Edmund.Taglieri@MassMail.State.MA.US).

### ***Read the full document below***

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### **MASSACHUSETTS COVID-19 NURSING HOME, REST HOME, AND ALR MOBILE TESTING PROGRAM REVISED GUIDANCE: APRIL 13, 2020**

Older adults living in congregate care settings, such as nursing homes, rest homes and assisted living residences are vulnerable to COVID-19. This program allows for safe, onsite sample collection by

either medical personnel at your facility or trained personnel from the Massachusetts National Guard or Fallon EMS Service. Nursing homes, Rest homes, and ALRs (Facilities) in Massachusetts are eligible for the program. **All residents and employees, symptomatic or asymptomatic, are eligible to be tested.**

To participate:

**Healthcare personnel at a facility identify the need to test the facility due to COVID-19 infection concerns.**

- You **MUST** have orders from a licensed provider for all tests. For facilities with ordering providers on-site (medical directors), the medical director or licensed independent provider on-call may serve as the ordering provider. For facilities with multiple on-site providers, ensure you have orders for all residents.
- For facilities without ordering providers associated with the facility, facility personnel should obtain orders from individuals' providers.
- **It is recommended that you order tests for all residents and staff, NOT just symptomatic individuals.**
- Due to supply constraints at this point, we can only support **one-time testing of the full facility to provide a baseline.**  
**Facility Administrator or designee calls mobile testing hotline at 617-366-2350. The hotline is staffed 7 days a week from 8AM-4PM ET.**

#### **OPTION 1 FOR ALL FACILITIES WITH ON-SITE OR AFFILIATED MEDICAL STAFF: request testing kits for your facility (preferred)**

- **Order:** Facilities use the Broad Institute requisition form which will be e-mailed to the medical director (ordering provider) after you request test kits on the mobile testing hotline. It will be pre-populated with your ordering physician name and facility information, such that you only need to fill in resident name, date of birth and sample information.
- **Delivery:** Call center will arrange a courier service to deliver the specimen collection materials to your facility. The specimen collection kit will include test kits and barcodes to label the samples.
- **Sampling:** Licensed health care personnel should don PPE following CDC guidance. When collecting diagnostic respiratory specimens from an individual who may be infected with COVID- 19, the health care professional should wear an N95 respirator (or facemask if N95 not available), eye protection, gloves, and a gown. Facilities without sufficient PPE should use traditional channels to request ([link](#)).
- **Labeling samples:** Label each test by attaching one barcode to tube and the other to the requisition form. Write Resident/Employee

Name and Date of Birth on swab tube and on pre-filled paper requisition. Place swab (break in half) in tube and close tube tightly. Place tube and paper requisition in bag and seal.

- **Paperwork:** One form (attached) must be completed for each person tested. This must be PRINTED and attached to the sample. Please also ensure the full facility name, address, zip code, and phone number are on every form. It is crucial that this information is filled-out in full for epidemiological tracking and patient reporting. Incompletely labeled samples may be rejected for testing.

- **Sending samples:** When finished taking patient samples, please call the courier number provided with your test kit delivery to schedule pick-up.

- **Resulting:** Your ordering provider should expect to receive results from the Broad Institute through a secure electronic manifest.

## **OPTION 2: FACILITIES WITHOUT ON-SITE OR AFFILIATED HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL:**

### **Schedule in-facility testing by MA National Guard or Fallon Emergency Medical Service**

- **Ordering:** Through this option, you can request (via the mobile testing hotline) for personnel to come to your facility to collect patient specimens.

- **Complete ALL paperwork prior to arrival:** For each resident being tested, you must print one requisition form, complete all fields, and attach to the sample. It is extremely important that this information is filled-out in full for proper epidemiological tracking and patient reporting. Ensure the full name of the facility, address, zip code and phone number are on every form.

Incompletely labeled samples may be rejected for testing. If paperwork is incomplete when testing team arrives, testing may not be completed.

- **Testing team arrives:** If MA National Guard is servicing your facility, you will be notified both the evening before and the morning of, when MANG is coming the next day. If Fallon is servicing your facility, you will receive a phone call the day before they arrive, letting you know when they will arrive for testing. We cannot take requests for either set of personnel

- Personnel will arrive at the Facility entrance in PPE. Please ensure security is aware of their visit.

- Personnel will doff PPE before leaving the building. A red PPE disposal container must be provided at the entrance of the building to allow the personnel to dispose of their PPE.

- **Await test results.** Tests requested via this program will be paid for by the state. The results will be communicated back with the ordering provider listed on the requisition form.

**WHAT TO DO WHILE AWAITING RESULTS:**

**Symptomatic individuals should be presumed positive while awaiting test results and should be isolated.**

Please consult with your local Board of Health for protocols on isolation and/or reach out to the DPH Epidemiology Line (24/7): 617-983-6800.

Negative results, especially in asymptomatic individuals, should be interpreted with caution, as they merely represent a point in time and individuals who test negative could still be within the incubation period of disease. Further, individuals potentially exposed but testing negative should still be closely monitored and quarantined as appropriate, if still within 14 days of exposure.

Employees who test positive, even while asymptomatic, should not be returning to work until a minimum of 7 days following the positive result.

**Additionally, please visit DPH's website that provides up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Massachusetts:**  
**<https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>.**

*Please contact us if you have any questions at, [MassALA@mass-ala.org](mailto:MassALA@mass-ala.org)*

*\*The information provided in this COVID 19 update is solely for general informational purposes to assist in understanding the evolving guidance regarding the current COVID 19 public health threat. It is not intended to be a primary public health or medical resource, but is provided as a clearinghouse for or compilation of various guidance issued by official and related sources.*