December 11, 2020

ALTSA: NH #2020-097

UPDATE ON NHSN AND STATE REPORTING PORTAL FOR COVID-19 DATA

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator

On May 8, 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published an interim final rule that established a requirement for facilities to report confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).

As an alternative, the reporting requirement can be met through data submission to a reporting portal built and managed by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Access to the DSHS reporting portal is here: https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/adsaapps/lookup/FacilityStatus/UpdateStatus.aspx

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of changes NHSN made to the data you must report. Below is a summary of significant modifications for the LTCF COVID-19 Manual, which went into effect on **November 23, 2020**.

Modifications Impacting the *Resident Impact and Facility Capacity* and *Staff and Personnel Impact* Pathways:
1. *Suspected* removed as a data field and no longer a reporting option.
2. *Confirmed* data field name changed to *Positive Tests*. This change represents a data field/variable name change only. LTCFs must continue to report based on the current NHSN guidance, which is to count a newly positive SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) viral test result from an antigen or PCR test performed on a resident and/or staff and personnel regardless of test results from additional viral testing.
3. ***Test Type*** added as a sub-set of *Positive Tests*. This additional data field will capture the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) viral test method(s) used. For example, the method used to identify the submitted *Positive Test*, as well as subsequent viral testing methods and results when performed within two days of the submitted *Positive Test*.
4. ***Re-Infections*** added as a sub-set of *Positive Tests*.
5. Additional data fields added to capture Influenza and other acute respiratory illness symptoms in presence and absence of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

Modifications Impacting the *Resident Impact and Facility Capacity* pathway *only*:
1. Removed questions related to COVID-19 viral testing and in-house point-of-care (POC) machines.
2. SARS-CoV-2 testing questions added to capture counts of COVID-19 POC and NON-POC viral tests (POC) performed on residents and staff and personnel.

DSHS has updated the state reporting portal questions to mirror the changes NHSN made, for those facilities choosing to use the state portal to report to NHSN. The NHSN questions, including those newly added, will only appear if you have opted to have DSHS share your facility data with DOH for NHSN upload.

Upcoming Information Sessions
To learn more about the November changes to the **Resident Impact and Facility Capacity** and **Staff and Personnel Impact** COVID-19 Module pathways, please register and attend one of the following webinars.

Date: Monday, Dec 14, 2020	**Date:** Thursday, Dec 17, 2020
Time: 12:30 – 1:30 PM ET	**Time:** 1:30 – 2:30 PM ET

Register in advance for these webinars:
https://cdc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_sRhorvThTnW1lIljhCsvWQ

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

More information and additional training is available at the "LTCF COVID-19 Module" website at NHSN: https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/covid19/index.html.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Herke, Nursing Home Policy Program Manager, at (509) 209-3088 or mailto:lisa.herke@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Amy Abbott

Amy Abbott on behalf of Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: *"Transforming Lives"*