

Home Health and Hospice Weekly Call
05/07/2020

1. Emergency rules for licensure have been written and sent for signature. We will let you know when they are available. There is still no anticipated date of signature.
2. Drive-thru testing is available at most county offices and The State Department of Health. The majority have specific hours and require an appointment. Testing also available at:
 - a. Choctaw Nation Health Clinic McAlester
 - b. Chickasaw Nation (Ardmore)
 - c. OSU Center for Health Sciences Tulsa
 - d. OU Tulsa
 - e. OU Wayman Tisdale Specialty Health Clinic Tulsa
 - f. OSDH currently has drive-thru testing located at 1000 NE 10th St., OKC. Patients would call 405-271-7774 to make an appointment 8:30-4:00pm M-F only.
3. If you are expecting a surge in admissions secondary to COVID-19 patients and/or patients refusing to go to hospitals because of fear of COVID, have you addressed this in your Emergency Plan or Surge Plan? Have you made adjustments based on:
 - a. Increased personnel needs (nurses, HHA/HA and social services)
 - b. Increased therapy needs (PT/OT/ST)
 - c. PPE
 - d. Equipment/supplies/DME.
4. Questions this week centered almost entirely around license extensions. Although we accept and process renewal applications as they come in, due to COVID-19, expiration dates have been extended to 09/30/2020.
5. Revised 1135 waiver information will be sent out today in our Provider and Supplier information.
6. CMS has released an “*Interim Final Rule Updating Requirements for Notification of Confirmed and Suspected COVID-19 Cases Among Residents and Staff in Nursing Homes.*” We have included a link to the Final rule as helpful information to home health and hospice providers. This will be sent out today in our Provider and Supplier Information. Please review the FAQ section where CMS answers questions on how this may pertain to hospices and home health agencies.



7. Questions and Answers

Q: What is the stance on nursing facilities that are not allowing hospice to see the patients and refusing any type of telehealth visit? They only allow communication by phone and state they don't have the staff or equipment available for virtual visits.

A: Your agency administrator or social worker could be a great advocate for these types of situations. For additional assistance, contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (405-521-6734). Also consider the facilities have seen an increase in COVID diagnosis and are doing everything in their ability to limit exposure to their vulnerable population. Also reach out to the patient's family/caregiver to make the patient's wishes and needs known.

Q: Nursing facility patients that have started the dying process are being denied visits as well. What do we do about that?

A: Make contact again and let the facility know there are exceptions allowed for end of life situations. Ask the facility what policies they have implemented to ensure end of life care is provided. In these cases, also call the Long Term Care Ombudsman (405-521-6734) to facilitate necessary visits and to advocate for the patient's needs. Lastly, email us the details and the facility name, so we can visit with LTC to see if there is something going on with that facility or if they can assist.

Q: What do we do when facilities instruct families or the patient to change hospice or home care agencies because the facility no longer allows that agency in the building?

A: LTC does allow the facilities to limit the number of agencies in the facility. If the patient doesn't want to change agencies, be their advocate. Express those concerns to LTC and let them know exactly what the problem is. Be specific and know the outcome you are looking for. Speak with the facility, ask them what can be done to create a better partnership. If they allow one member of your team but not another, look at the plan of care to see if there is a way to cluster care. Again, if the client's needs and wishes are not being met, do not hesitate to contact the Long Term Care Ombudsman (405-271-6734).