

Questions & Answers
Assisted Living/Res Care/Adult Day Care Provider Call
Wednesday, April 20th, 2022
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Links provided in the Q&A chat box or in Q&A can be located at the end of this document.

(Note: Similar related questions were combined and a single response was provided.)

***NEWLY RELEASED UP TO DATE GUIDANCE:** On 04/21/22, CDC released the following in [Stay Up to Date with Your COVID-19 Vaccines](#). “You are **up to date** with your COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and one booster when eligible... Getting a second booster is not necessary to be considered up to date at this time. The recommendations will be different depending on your age, your health status, what vaccine you first received, and when you first got vaccinated.”

NURSE AIDE REGISTRY (NAR):

1. Q: With the CMS waiver ending, how would a facility apply for an emergency waiver to continue training with the current staffing shortage?

A: There is a Temporary Emergency Waiver for the facility which may be applied for. The application can be found on the [Nurse Aide Registry \(NAR\) website](#). You may also contact NAR at NAR@health.ok.gov or 405.426.8150.

2. Q: What other ways can someone contact someone about updating a certification or about waiting for approval for an already trained CNA to get tested? She has documents showing completion but from another facility's emergency waiver program. Does she need to take the actual course to be certified? Or can she submit her documents to NARS for registry?

A: Contact the Nurse Aide Registry at NAR@health.ok.gov or you may contact Espa Bowen at Espab@health.ok.gov. Have her submit her documents to NAR for review and if additional information is required, they will contact her.

3. Q: We aren't getting any response from registry.

A: Espa Bowen said NAR is getting lots of calls and emails. She asked that you give them at least 24 hours to respond and someone will get back to you.

4. Q: Are communities able to hire CNA's or CMA's if they have proof they have sent in their application or showed the check has been cashed.

A: No, they need to have the certification with the number. Contact Espa Bowen at Espab@health.ok.gov if you would like to have a discussion.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL:

5. Q: With the Mask mandate being lifted for travel and COVID cases trending down, will Oklahoma be relaxing mask mandates in LTC? Will the new survey manager be surveying LTC residents and/or staff on whether vaccine and mask mandates make them feel safer? Maybe that data would be helpful in the decision-making process.

Q: Is it acceptable to consider the community transmission rate in resident masking requirements?

A: Mask mandates are being lifted in some settings, but they have not been lifted for healthcare facilities. The CDC did revise the masking guidance for the public, but they made it very clear the changes did not relate to healthcare facilities. The CDC is still recommending masks for healthcare facilities. Refer to [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#) under the *Implement Source Control Measures* section which reads in part, “HCP who are up to date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses:

Could choose not to wear source control or physically distance when they are in well-defined areas that are restricted from patient access (e.g., staff meeting rooms, kitchen).

*They **should wear source control** when they are in areas of the healthcare facility where they could encounter patients (e.g., hospital cafeteria, common halls/corridors) ...*

Residents who are up to date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses in Nursing Homes in Areas of Low to Moderate Transmission:

Nursing homes are healthcare settings, but they also serve as a home for long-stay residents and quality of life should be balanced with risks for transmission. In light of this, consideration could be given to allowing residents who are up to date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses to not use source control when in communal areas of the facility...”

The new Director of Survey, Shayla Spriggs, and the PMCs, Zach Collins and Ed Roth, will be making visits to facilities.

6. Q: Are there any new infection control changes for COVID? example... masking, group dining without social distancing, etc.? Or any thoughts on when we can expect changes for life to get back to normal, whatever that may be....

Q: Is the state looking at making any changes regarding visitation and group gatherings? Our residents are questioning why they cannot have group events with each other and visitors with the changes in the outside community. It is frustrating for them.

Q: YES! Our residents have small apartments and want to eat with family in the dining room.

Q: Our family members coming to visit are getting upset with the screening and masking. They are frustrated with seeing changes in the outside community but not in assisted living. Are there any updates for changes to this?

Q: It seems our seniors are still being isolated from the things they enjoy doing. I feel like their rights are being violated by them still being held by these laws, especially after watching the White House celebrate in such an elaborate fashion. If these same residents were at their home, they would not have these restrictions. Is there an end in sight? It feels as a facility with these safety

features, we are interfering with their personal rights and quality of life. how else can we advocate for our residents and their rights?

A: There has been no recent changes to the CDC guidance for healthcare facilities. These are the standards that are in place. We do understand everyone's frustration. Consider you are caring for the most vulnerable population. Consider what is going on in the facility. Consider what the risks would be. Consider the resident's need and use a person-centered approach. Now that the weather is getting nicer, you might consider some outdoor functions. CDC guidance related to your concerns can be found in [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#) and [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes \(Nursing Homes & Long-Term Care Facilities\)](#). You may also refer to the [Non-NH Visitation Grid](#) which provides guidance to many of these concerns. Contact LTC if you have concerns or discussions.

Dr. LaTrina Frazier provided the following responses during the March 9th, 2022 Provider Call:

We understand that the staff are probably tired of wearing masks. We also understand it can be difficult keeping their morale up and keeping them mindful of why it is necessary to wear a mask. Remember it is your residents who are vulnerable and the staff are wearing masks for good reasons. Consider the risks. We are hopeful for this in the future. We, as a State, seem to be moving in the right direction. Even though you are not a CMS facility, please know that we hold weekly meetings with CMS, who collaborates closely with the CDC. We are constantly asking what the plans are, what is the update, and what the future looks like. Your due diligence is important when you consider the population you serve.

...whenever we entered into the pandemic, a group of providers was put together to discuss the challenges we were facing. The group of providers and OSDH came to an agreement that we would follow the CDC recommendations and guidance... there are some infection prevention and control concerns.

7. Q: Why do we keep getting referred to CMS vs CDC since we do not follow under CMS? For example, CDC states that vaccinated staff are not required to wear a mask if county is green?

A: All guidance presented today is per CDC guidance.

Please be sure you are following the guidance for healthcare facilities and not the guidance for the general public. When you speak of a "green" county, that refers to guidance for the general public and does not relate to healthcare personnel. We find no guidance that says staff are not required to wear a mask. Refer to [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#) under the *Implement Source Control Measures* section which reads in part, "HCP who are up to date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses:

Could choose not to wear source control or physically distance when they are in well-defined areas that are restricted from patient access (e.g., staff meeting rooms, kitchen).

*They **should wear source control** when they are in areas of the healthcare facility where they could encounter patients (e.g., hospital cafeteria, common halls/corridors) ...*

8. Q: What is the point of getting the shot if masks and screening is still mandated?

A: COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and even dying—especially people who are boosted. Masking and screening are infection prevention and control measures that further protect an individual from infection.

BOOSTERS/UP TO DATE:

9. Q: Does the second booster approved for seniors affect their fully vaccinated status or is it optional?

Q: When you reference eligible for a booster, are you referencing the 1st booster or the second booster? Is up to date- 1 booster or two, considering my understanding, that 65 years and older are eligible for second booster?

Q: Following up on vaccination response: If a resident is eligible for a second booster but does not want it, does that mean they are no longer fully vaccinated? Will this affect their ability to join in group activities/eat in the dining room/ be in communal areas without a mask?

A: When one speaks about the boosters, the term used now is “Up to Date.” On 04/21/22, CDC released the following in [Stay Up to Date with Your COVID-19 Vaccines](#). “You are **up to date** with your COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and one booster when eligible... Getting a second booster is not necessary to be considered up to date at this time. The recommendations will be different depending on your age, your health status, what vaccine you first received, and when you first got vaccinated.” CDC does encourage those additional boosters when they are eligible. The recommendations will be different depending on your age, your health status, what vaccine you first received, and when you first got vaccinated. The CDC recommendations for boosters can be found on the above CDC webpage.

MISCELLANEOUS:

10. No one is answering or emailing back when calling.

A: If you are speaking about replies from LTC, the management team is going out on surveys and may not respond immediately. Zach Collins recommends, if you are having difficulty getting a response in a timely manner, to reach out to him at Zachc@health.ok.gov. Our goal is to respond to all of your emails and calls in a timely manner.

Janene Stewart’s final comments:

I appreciate you for all you and your staff do for the residents of Oklahoma. You do have an important role. Thank you for taking the time to join us on the call today. Please reach out to LTC or the NAR if you have any questions or concerns.

Links provided in the Q&A chat box or in Q&A:

CDC - Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes (Nursing Homes & Long-Term Care Facilities) - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>

CDC - Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Ftesting-healthcare-personnel.html

CDC - Stay Up to Date with Your COVID-19 Vaccines - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fvaccines%2Ffully-vaccinated.html#recommendations

OSDH Contacts:

LTC:

Main phone: 405.426.8200

Email: ltc@health.ok.gov

Fax for Incident Form: 283 1.866.239.7553

Director of LTC - Janene Stewart email: Janene.Stewart@health.ok.gov

Zach Collins (CMP) email: Zachc@health.ok.gov

Nurse Aide Registry (NAR):

Webpage: nar.health.ok.gov

Main phone: 405.426.8150

Email: NAR@health.ok.gov

Espa Bowen email – EspaB@health.ok.gov

OSDH – LTC COVID-19 Resource Provider Guidance webpage - <https://oklahoma.gov/health/protective-health/long-term-care-service/ltc-covid-19-resources/provider-guidance.html>

OSDH - Non-NH Visitation Grid - <https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/health/health2/aem-documents/protective-health/long-term-care-services/covid-19/nursing-home-grids/Non-NH%20Visitation%20Grid.pdf>