TO: Hospitals, All Nursing Homes and ALSAs
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    Donna Ortelle, Section Chief, Facility Licensing and Investigations Section

DATE: April 17, 2020

SUBJECT: Revised Discharge Criteria Document (Revised April 17, 2020)

The attached document is for your attention.
Hospital Discharges to Nursing Homes During COVID-19 Pandemic (Revised April 17, 2020)

Nursing homes are an essential component of the statewide surge plan,\(^1\) and they care for a population at great risk for morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19. This guidance for both hospitals and nursing homes, based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)\(^2,3\), allows for safe and timely transfer of hospitalized patients when they are ready for hospital discharge and have a need for skilled nursing care.

There are 3 types of nursing home facilities:
1. **Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes**: These may or may not have COVID-positive residents. Those with residents that develop suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should cohort residents and staff appropriately.
2. **COVID Recovery Facilities**: existing nursing homes dedicated to accepting COVID-positive patients from hospitals, particularly those demonstrating a likelihood for continued nursing home care after recovery from acute illness
3. **Alternate COVID Recovery Facilities**: previously vacated spaces that are being reoccupied to care for COVID-positive patients from hospitals who demonstrate a likelihood for discharge back to the community afterwards

**Patient Type Definitions:**
1. **COVID status unknown**: patients who were not tested for COVID-19 because they never had signs or symptoms of COVID-19 OR patients who tested negative for COVID-19
2. **COVID-positive**: patients who have tested positive for COVID-19

**Hospital Discharges to Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes**

**COVID status unknown patients** should not be refused transfer to Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes, IF:
- The patient has no current COVID-19 symptoms; AND
- One nasopharyngeal (NP) or oropharyngeal (OP) specimen from the patient tests negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA

**COVID status unknown patients** can be transferred to Nursing Homes without meeting the criteria above.

**COVID status unknown nursing home residents** should return to their nursing home after an Emergency Department visit or same-day procedure without COVID-19 testing if the resident is not admitted to an inpatient floor and hospital stay is \(\leq 48\) hours.

**COVID-positive patients** should not be refused transfer to Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes, IF:
- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for \(\geq 72\) hours; AND
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath); AND
- Two consecutive NP or OP specimens (collected \(\geq 24\) hours apart) test negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA

**For the three scenarios above**, the patient can be quarantined in their room for 14 days upon arrival at the nursing home. If symptoms develop during the quarantine period, they should be tested for COVID-19.
COVID-positive patients can be transferred to Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes without meeting the criteria above, provided the nursing home has an ability to adhere to infection prevention and control recommendations for the care of COVID-19 patients. Preferably, the patient would be placed in a location designated to care for COVID-19 residents.

Patients testing positive for COVID-19 can be transferred to a COVID Recovery Facility if an Existing/Traditional Nursing does not accept the patient due to inability to care for the patient.

**Hospital Discharges of COVID-Positive Patients to COVID Recovery Facilities**

**COVID-positive patients can be transferred to COVID Recovery Facilities if:**
- An existing/traditional nursing home does not accept the patient; AND
- The patient resided in a nursing home immediately prior to hospitalization OR the patient demonstrates need for skilled nursing after recovery from acute illness

**COVID-positive patients can be transferred to Alternate COVID Recovery Facilities if:**
- An existing/traditional nursing home does not accept the patient; AND
- The patient demonstrates potential for discharge to the community after recovery from acute illness

**Table: Discharge guidance for hospitalized patients requiring skilled nursing.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discharge to:</th>
<th>COVID-Positive Patient</th>
<th>COVID Status Unknown Patient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing/Traditional Nursing Home if</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Nursing Home is aware of the patient’s COVID status and accepts the patient;&lt;br&gt;- Adequate infection control measures can be taken by the Nursing Home to contain COVID-19.</td>
<td>1. Fever-free without fever-reducing medications ≥ 72 hours;&lt;br&gt;2. Improvement in respiratory symptoms&lt;br&gt;AND&lt;br&gt;3. Two consecutive NP or OP specimens (collected ≥ 24 hours apart) test negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA;&lt;br&gt;4. Patient is quarantined for 14 days upon arrival at the nursing home. If symptoms develop during the quarantine period, they should be tested for COVID-19.</td>
<td>1. Patient has no current COVID-19 symptoms;&lt;br&gt;2. One nasopharyngeal NP or OP specimen tests negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA;&lt;br&gt;3. Patient is quarantined for 14 days upon arrival at the nursing home. If symptoms develop during the quarantine period, they should be tested for COVID-19.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COVID Recovery Facility if:</strong>&lt;br&gt;- The patient resided in a nursing home immediately prior to hospitalization;&lt;br&gt;- The patient demonstrates potential need for skilled nursing after recovery from acute illness</td>
<td>1. Traditional Nursing Home will not accept the patient</td>
<td>1. Rule-out testing is positive (patient becomes COVID-positive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternate COVID Recovery Facility if:</strong>&lt;br&gt;- The patient demonstrates potential for discharge to the community after recovery from acute illness</td>
<td>1. Traditional Nursing Home will not accept the patient</td>
<td>1. Rule-out testing is positive (patient becomes COVID-positive)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Questions about these guidelines for transfer to nursing homes and infection control issues can be directed to the DPH Infectious Diseases Section at 860-509-7995. Other questions about COVID-19 can be emailed to COVID19.dph@ct.gov

**References:**