



Department of Health

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DATE: April 7, 2020
TO: Nursing Homes (NHs)
FROM: NYSDOH Division of Nursing Homes & ICF/IID Surveillance

**Health Advisory: In Response to COVID-19, CMS Has Released a Waiver to Address
The High Need for Paid Feeding Assistants in Nursing Homes**

Please distribute immediately to:
Administrators, Medical Directors, Nursing Directors, Risk Managers

Due to the immediate and critical needs in skilled nursing facilities related to COVID-19, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has received a waiver from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the eight (8) hour training requirement for Feeding Assistants.

During the COVID-19 emergency, a facility may use a Feeding Assistant who has not completed the standard eight (8) hour training program provided if:

- 1) The facility provides abbreviated training to the Feeding Assistant in the following areas, at minimum:
 - a. Feeding techniques;
 - b. Assistance with feeding and hydration;
 - c. Communication and interpersonal skills;
 - d. Appropriate responses to resident behavior;
 - e. Safety and emergency procedures, including the Heimlich maneuver;
 - f. Infection control;
 - g. Resident rights; and
 - h. Recognizing changes in residents that are inconsistent with their normal behavior and the importance of reporting those changes to the supervisory nurse.
- 2) The Feeding Assistant successfully completes a competency assessment upon completion of the training; and
- 3) The Feeding Assistant will provide dining assistance only for residents who have no complicated feeding problems. Complicated feeding problems include, but are not limited to, difficulty swallowing, recurrent lung aspirations, and tube or parenteral/IV feedings. The facility must base resident selection on the interdisciplinary team's assessment and the resident's latest assessment and plan of care. Appropriateness for this program should be reflected in the comprehensive care plan.

The feeding assistant must work under the supervision of a registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN).

The facility must maintain a record of all Feeding Assistants who have successfully completed training and proven competency under this advisory.

General questions or comments about this advisory can be sent to icp@health.ny.gov or covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov.