

March 12, 2020

Greetings Long Term Care Providers,

On March 9, 2020, the American Health Care Association (AHCA) sent out [recommendations](#) highlighting efforts to prevent novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. We strongly support these recommendations and want to reiterate that skilled nursing facilities, basic care facilities and assisted living facilities should consider dramatic action to limit individuals from entering the building and ensuring employees who are sick, stay home.

We support the AHCA's five actions to help prevent the entry of COVID-19 into your facilities, this is regardless of whether or not COVID-19 has been identified within your community. Find more details on the following recommendations on the [AHCA website](#).

- 1. Allow entry to only individuals who need entry.** Visitors should be limited to the immediate family members of those residents who are in critical condition or at end-of-life.
- 2. Restrict activities and visitors who increase the risk for exposure.** This includes postponing visiting youth groups, volunteers, music groups, etc.
- 3. Actively screen individuals entering the building** and restrict entry to those with respiratory symptoms or possible exposure to COVID-19.
- 4. Require all individuals entering the building to wash their hands at entry.**
- 5. Set up processes to allow remote communication for residents and others.** Also be sure to communicate with families about the steps you're taking to protect their loved ones.

The CDC has said that the highest rate of illness and death is for those over the age of 80, especially those who also have long-term health conditions like diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease. We all have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Thank you for the work you do and for continuing to make the care of your residents your top priority.

The NDDoH will establish a state program to assist all long term care facilities to ensure infection control protocols are in place and these recommendations are being implemented. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Bruce Pritschet in Health Facilities at 1-877-460-0890.



Mylynn Tufte, MSIM, MBA, RN
North Dakota State Health Officer