



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

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Reference: NF-20-65 **REVISED PROVIDER ALERT**

Date: March 5, 2020 Revises Provider Alert sent 02/29/2020

To: Nursing Facility Providers, Community Based Care Providers & Adult Foster Home Providers

From: Safety, Oversight and Quality (SOQ)

Subject: **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
CLARIFICATION to Previous Communication**

Dear Long-Term Care Providers:

This alert is being resent to **clarify** recommendations related to allowing visitors in your facilities. We ask for your immediate action in helping prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) illness in Oregon long-term care facilities.

In recent days, concerns have grown in Oregon about the recent occurrences of a new strain of coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. COVID-19 is a new respiratory illness that has sickened tens of thousands of people worldwide. It is very important that we do all we can to ensure that vulnerable populations, including older adults and people with disabilities, are not exposed to the virus.

We are sending this alert to encourage you to post a notice to visitors to practice prevention when entering a long-term care facility. An example notice is attached that may be customized for your specific facility.

We have included a link to informational materials from the Oregon Health Authority to help educate the public about how to prevent the spread of flu viruses.
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Pages/emerging-respiratory-infections.aspx>

DHS encourages facilities to screen visitors for the following:

1. International travel within the last 14 days to restricted countries. For updated information on restricted countries visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
2. Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a fever, cough, and sore throat.

3. Has had contact with someone with or under investigation for COVID-19.

If visitors meet any of the above criteria, facilities may restrict their entry to the facility. Regulations and guidance related to restricting a resident's right to visitors can be found at 42 CFR §483.10(f)(4), and at F-tag 563 of Appendix PP of the State Operations Manual. Specifically, a facility may need to restrict or limit visitation rights for reasonable clinical and safety reasons. This includes, "restrictions placed to prevent community-associated infection or communicable disease transmission to the resident." A resident's risk factors for infection (e.g., immunocompromised condition) or current health state (e.g., end-of-life care) should be considered when restricting visitors. In general, visitors with signs and symptoms of a transmissible infection (e.g., a visitor is febrile and exhibiting signs and symptoms of an influenza-like illness) should defer visitation until he or she is no longer potentially infectious (e.g., 24 hours after resolution of fever without antipyretic medication).

We will not allow facilities to adopt blanket policies prohibiting visitors. The Department of Human Services appreciates the desire and efforts of facilities to keep their communities' virus free; we share those goals. However, residents do benefit from visits and a complete ban is not an action we can support.

Encouraging, but not requiring, the use of other forms of visitation such as Skype, Facetime, phone calls and offsite visits may be used successfully in some circumstances.

Case managers, guardians, ombudsman, protective services workers and licensors remain permitted to visit facilities for their regular business, so long as they are following CDC guidelines for illness prevention at all times. **This does not preclude a facility from screening potential visitors and denying visitation for those deemed a health risk for COVID-19 by the CDC guidelines.** You may also require visitors to comply with infection control practices that are reasonably adopted for your community.

Again, we ask that facilities post signage encouraging visitors with symptoms, or whom have visited impacted countries or whom have been exposed to COVID-19, not to visit. Universal precautions should remain in place and be practiced for the protection of all residents, staff and visitors.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this revision to this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

Michael McCormick
Interim Director
Aging and People with Disabilities Program
Department of Human Services

"Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe"
An Equal Opportunity Employer

ATTACHMENTS

For general information about the DHS Office of Safety, Oversight and Quality, visit the DHS Web site at www.oregon.gov/DHS/. If you have questions about this alert, please contact the Adult Foster Home Unit at APD.AFHTeam@dhsosha.state.or.us.

Novel Coronavirus

Fact Sheet

What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus. It has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people and there is not a treatment.

How does novel coronavirus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:

- the air by coughing and sneezing
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes

How severe is novel coronavirus?

Experts are still learning about the range of illness from novel coronavirus. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus:

Fever



Cough



Difficulty breathing



What should I do if I have symptoms?

Call your healthcare provider to identify the safest way to receive care. Let them know if you have traveled to an affected area within the last 14 days.

Who is at risk for novel coronavirus?

Currently the risk to the general public is low. At this time, there are a small number of individual cases in the U.S. To minimize the risk of spread, health officials are working with healthcare providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

Travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk. See wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel for the latest travel guidance from the CDC.

How can I prevent from getting novel coronavirus?

If you are traveling overseas (to China but also to other places) follow the CDC's guidance: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.

Right now, the novel coronavirus has not been spreading widely in the United States, so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public. Steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing



Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent novel coronavirus infections.

How is novel coronavirus treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

For more information:

www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus

Updated 1/31/2020



PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION
Health Security, Preparedness and Response (HSPR)

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Public Health Division at 971-673-0977 or 971-673-0372. We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.

How can I avoid getting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Right now, the risk of getting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low in the U.S.

Steps you can take to prevent the spread of flu and the common cold can also help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.



Wash your hands often with soap and water.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.



Avoid contact with sick people and stay home if you're sick.



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

Due to a recent confirmed case of coronavirus in Oregon, and flu season,

is taking additional precautions to prevent the transmission of these illnesses and protect the health of our residents.

If you are not feeling well – and in particular, if you have a fever, a cough or are experiencing difficulty breathing or shortness of breath – or if you recently

traveled to an area
experiencing a coronavirus
outbreak, we kindly ask that
you not visit until you are
certain that you are not
contagious.
If questions, please contact

Thank you!