



**Date:** October 28, 2020

500 Summer St NE E44

Salem, OR, 97301

Voice: 800-336-6016

Fax: 503-945-6873

TTY: 711

**To:** Home Health providers  
Hospice providers

[www.oregon.gov/OHA/HSD](http://www.oregon.gov/OHA/HSD)

**CC:** Coordinated care organizations (CCOs)

**From:** Nathan Roberts, Traditional Programs manager  
Dave Inbody, CCO Operations Manager

**Subject:** Updates to Requirements for Hospice & Home Health Providers and COVID-19 testing in long-term care facilities

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) has released a final rule effective November 01, 2020 that impacts hospice and home health agencies.

- Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) [411-060-0027](#) (Routine Staff Testing Requirements) now requires “associated staff” defined in OAR 411-060-0005 to be routinely tested according to the ODHS COVID-19 testing requirements for ODHS Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) licensed assisted living facilities (ALF), nursing facilities (NF) and residential care facilities (RCF).
- The rule outlines the specific testing frequency required for hospice and home health direct care staff.

This change means any home health and hospice staff providing direct care services in long-term care facilities are subject to the COVID-19 testing requirements defined in [OAR 411-060-0027](#).

## What should you do?

Hospice and home health agencies are responsible for ensuring testing of their providers prior to entering all types of ODHS APD-licensed settings including NFs, ALFs, and RCFs.

- Agencies will be required to ensure that any of their staff that fall under the definition of associated staff are tested according to OAR 411-060-0027, keep documentation of results, and provide verification to the long-term care facility administration—that staff they assign to any facility have met the requirements as specified in OAR.
- If your hospice or home health agency does not currently have access to COVID-19 testing, you should consider developing an agreement with a testing services company to test your staff. You may also contact [your Local Public Health Authority](#) (LPHA) to request access to COVID-19 testing supplies and resources, similar to how you would request personal protective equipment (PPE). However, LPHA supplies and capacity to support routine staff testing will likely vary from county to county and time to time, so should not be relied on regularly to meet the ongoing requirements of this rule. CARES Act funds distributed earlier this year to home health and hospice providers were also meant to offset staff testing and PPE costs.

## **Why is this happening?**

This change is based on updates to federal requirements and the Governor's desire to ensure Oregon implements a policy to safeguard residents in long-term care facilities.

ODHS made this change to align state rules and guidance with the recently released federal rules and guidance for staff testing at nursing facilities, and to increase health protections for long-term care facility and staff. Long-term care facilities account for about a third of the outbreaks in Oregon and over half of the COVID-related deaths in the state. State and national evidence indicates that most of these outbreaks occur when infected staff come into the facility.

## **Additional information:**

To learn more about this change and for the latest information from ODHS please follow this link to the [DHS Long Term Care Facility COVID-19 Testing](#) webpage.

Please also be sure to follow current state and federal guidance regarding infection control to protect the vulnerable populations we serve. You can find guidance from OHA and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on [OHA's COVID-19 page for health care providers](#) (look under "Healthcare Providers and Clinical Laboratories").

## **Questions?**

If you have any questions about this announcement, contact Kian Messkoub at  
[KIAN.Z.MESSKOUN@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:KIAN.Z.MESSKOUN@dhsoha.state.or.us)

Thank you for your continued support of the Oregon Health Plan and the services you provide to our members.