



Pennsylvania Health Care Association Webinar
May 27, 2019

Truth or Fiction: COVID-19 Reporting in Pennsylvania

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Thank You For All You Are Doing

- As a nation and as a state, we have lost sight of you and your staff's dedication and commitment to your residents and families
- National focus on protecting the nation's hospitals from the "surge" without a concomitant emphasis on helping long term care facilities protect their residents, has had unintended, but predictable consequences
- You are the heroes...with gratitude

Stay Focused

- Residents
- Families
- Staff
- Communicate well and consistently (document)
 - Internal
 - External

COVID-19: Everyone Wants to Know

- Local health departments
- PA Department of Health (DOH)
- PA Department of Human Services (DHS)
- PA Office of Attorney General/Local District Attys
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN)
- US Department of Justice (DOJ)
- US Office of Inspector General (OIG)
- Media

Paper Over People--Reporting

- Corvena (Knowledge Center): Daily (4/21/2020)
- DOH Survey123: Daily (5/1/2020)
- To families/residents: 5 pm next day following new case of COVID positive or cluster of 3 or more staff/residents experiencing new respiratory symptoms within 72 hours of each other; or weekly if nothing new (5/8/2020)

Paper Over People--Reporting

- DOH Electronic Reporting System (ERS): New case or death; COVID-19 testing
- CDC NHSN: Weekly (5/17/2020)
- County/local health departments: Varies
- Line listings: Varies

ERS Reporting for COVID-19 Testing (3/19/2020)

- Resident Name and DOB
- Date of Symptom onset
- What symptoms are
- Other residents or staff with similar symptoms
- Any tests run and note specific tests collected or run
- When test was collected and when it was sent and which lab it was sent to
- Place the event in pending and update when results are known

PA-NEDSS

- PA's version of the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System
- SNFs cannot access and do not submit reports to NEDSS
- Allows the "healthcare system" to report diseases and investigative findings 24/7 to DOH
- Allows DOH to report diseases and findings to CDC

1 Plus 1 May Never Equal 2

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 | Today's Paper

The Philadelphia Inquirer

NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS OPINION POLITICS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE FOOD HEALTH REAL ESTATE OBITUARIES JOBS

65 COVID-19 cases among 16 residents, and other glaring errors in Pa. nursing home data

by Harold Brubaker, Updated: 35 minutes ago

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What Time Period Is Reported?

- Survey 123: Retrospective and cumulative from January 1, 2020
 - Starting number 5; new cases 7, 10
- NHSN: May 1, 2020 and then only add new information per calendar day (retrospective before May 1 is optional)
 - Starting number 5; new cases 2, 3
- How will DOH reconcile with CDC?

Admissions from Hospitals

- NHSN: residents newly admitted or readmitted to the SNF from a hospital where they were treated for suspected or laboratory positive COVID-19 since the last date Admission counts were entered
- DOH: cumulative
 - SNFs may not refuse to accept or readmit a patient or resident due to pending test results but may refuse to accept resident if a COVID-19 test has not been administered

Residents with Lab Positive Confirms

- NHSN: residents who have been newly identified as having laboratory positive COVID-19 test results since last date that Confirmed COVID-19 counts were entered, including residents who are in SNF, as well as residents who were transferred out, admitted elsewhere, or died
- DOH: Cumulative
- Potential for over-counting

New “Suspected” COVID Residents

- NHSN: number of residents who have been or are newly managed as though they have COVID-19 (but do not have a laboratory positive COVID-19 test result) since the last date that Suspected COVID-19 counts were entered, including residents who are in SNF, as well as residents who were transferred out, admitted elsewhere, or died
- DOH: cumulative

Total Deaths

- NHSN: number of residents who died for any reason in SNF or another location since the last date Total Death counts were entered
- DOH: cumulative

COVID-19 Deaths

- NHSN: number of new deaths for residents with suspected AND confirmed COVID-19 (laboratory positive COVID-19) since the last date COVID-19 Death counts were entered, includes residents who died in SNF or another location. Note: Include only new deaths
- DOH: cumulative
- Potential for over-counting and no distinction for confirmed or suspected

Staffing

- NHSN: report new deaths, confirmed cases, suspected cases
- DOH: report cumulative

Staffing Issues

- Will CMS post self-reported staffing shortages?
 - Use of temporary staff does not count as a staffing shortage if staffing ratios are met according to the SNF's needs and internal policies for staffing ratios
- Consistency of information
 - DOH "waivers" of 2.7 ppd
 - Payroll based journal (PBJ) reports
 - Knowledge Center/Corvena reports

Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- AHCA advises that, “According to the CDC, “to maintain consistency in reporting, if a facility is *using crisis level strategies*” the facility is experiencing a *shortage*. “In other words, PPE strategies that do not commensurate with U.S. standards of care are considered as a shortage. For information in relation to CDC’s optimization strategies for PPE (standard, conventional, and crisis), we encourage facilities to refer to Optimize PPE Supply website.””

Manage Your Message

- Consider your medium: email, web, voicemail
- Explain your numbers as the “accurate” count
 - DOH numbers may differ by county of residency
 - DOH numbers are cumulative
 - DOH numbers from NEDSS do not include SNF resident who died elsewhere
- Celebrate your staff, residents and families

Manage Your Message

- Highlight your mitigation efforts
- Consider “positive” stories with local media
- Prepare for setbacks
 - Universal testing
 - “Beach Blanket Bingo”
 - Second wave
 - Opening of visitation

The Next Installment?

- Surveys
- Lawsuits (currently no facility immunities in PA)
- Criminal investigations
- False claims cases

OIG Work Plan May 2020 Additions

- Audit of Nursing Home Infection Prevention and Control Program Deficiencies
- Nursing Home Oversight During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Monitoring Psychotropic Drug Use in Nursing Homes
- Audit of CARES Act Provider Relief Funds

Other Initiatives

- PA Attorney General
 - May 12, 2020 press release announcing criminal investigations and public email for criminal complaints and reports of neglect
- DOJ National Nursing Home Initiative
 - 30 investigations started March 2020

Strategies for Success

- Gather information in one place: “to cohort or not to cohort”....that is not the only question
- Collect DOH, CMS, and CDC memos – they tell an interesting story
- Update policies (facility assessments?)
- Document requests for help, clarification, support

It is Time to Stop the Blame

As Governor Cuomo so aptly said:

“Who is accountable for those 139 deaths? How do we get justice for those families that had 139 deaths? What is justice? Who can we prosecute for those deaths? . . . Nobody. Nobody. Mother Nature? God? Where did this virus come from? People are going to die by this virus. That is the truth.”

Reported in *Skilled Nursing News*, “Cuomo Backs Off on Nursing Home Prosecutions: ‘People Are Going to Die By This Virus. That’s the Truth,’” May 20, 2020



https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/thank-you-doctors-nurses_7509779.htm;
Medical vector
created by pikisuperstar - www.freepik.com

Questions??

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