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Subject: Long-term Care Testing Clarification

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Long-term Care Testing Clarification

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 at long-term care and residential facilities, the Agency for Health Care Administration issued [Emergency Rule 59AER20-6](#). This rule replaces the previous Emergency Rule 59AER20-01 and provides further clarity to hospitals and long-term care facilities about clinical decision making during the discharge of residents.

- A hospital is prohibited from discharging any resident who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to any long-term care facility until the resident has been cleared for discharge using either a test-based strategy or a symptom-based strategy, unless the receiving facility has a dedicated wing, unit, or building with dedicated staff to accept the COVID-19 positive resident.

Under the symptom-based strategy, the long-term care facility resident must meet the following criteria:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms; and
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Under the test-based strategy, the long-term care facility resident must have:

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms; and
- Two consecutive negative test results separated by 24 hours. The first by an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay RT-PCR test and the second by either an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay RT-PCR test or an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 antigen test.

Individuals who have not tested positive for COVID-19 and who are not suspected of having COVID-19 must still be tested but may be admitted to the long-term care facility while awaiting their results as long as they are isolated until they receive a negative result.

Isolation Following Admissions

Long-term care facilities may admit a patient with an unknown status (has not tested positive for COVID-19 nor been suspected of having COVID-19) as long as they isolate the resident for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. For anyone who has tested negative prior to long-term care admission or is discharged from a hospital using the symptom-based strategy, the resident does not require isolation for 14 days but should be monitored.

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