Retirement Communities and Independent Living Facilities FAQs for Administrators

Accessible version: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/retirement/faq.html

Planning and Preparedness

Q: What actions can residents and staff take to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

A: Encourage residents and staff to take everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses. Actions include staying home when sick; appropriately covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning and then disinfecting frequently touched surfaces; and washing hands often with soap and water.

Q: How can my retirement community or independent living facility prepare for COVID-19?

A: Administrators should take the following actions to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak in their community or facility:

- Promote social distancing
  - » Cancel public or group activities and events
  - » Inform workers and volunteers to avoid close contact with residents
  - » When possible, limit visitors and volunteers to essential persons
  - » Advise residents to stay home and avoid public places
  - » Alter schedules to reduce mixing (e.g., stagger meal, activity, arrival/departure times)
  - » Support residents in preparing
  - » Establish the 'buddy' system to ensure residents stay connected.
  - » Encourage residents to have extra medications and supplies.
  - » Identify residents with unique needs and work with them to tailor these strategies.
  - » Find ways to support residents in managing stress and anxiety.
  - » Inform residents using print materials and high-visibility posters

- Encourage everyone to take everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses.
  - » Cover coughs and sneezes
  - » Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
  - » Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - » Ensure hand hygiene supplies (e.g., hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol) are readily available in all buildings.

- Monitor for cases and take action when someone is sick.
  - » Screen workers and when possible volunteers
  - » Ask residents to self-monitor for symptoms
  - » Review the usual absenteeism patterns at your facility among staff, so you can identify if the rate of absenteeism increases.
  - » Implement flexible sick-leave policies and actively encourage sick employees to stay home
  - » Coordinate with local health facilities if you suspect a resident or staff member may have COVID-19

cdc.gov/coronavirus

Q: What resources does CDC have available to share with facilities?

A: Share resources with the community to help them understand COVID-19 and steps they can take to protect themselves:

- CDC COVID-19 business guidance
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html
- CDC COVID-19 healthcare guidance
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html
- CDC COVID-19 household guidance
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/checklist-household-ready.html
- CDC Make a Kit
  https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/kids-and-families.html
- CDC's health communication resources
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html
- CDC offers several free handwashing resources that include health promotion materials https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html and information on proper handwashing technique. https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

Q: Does CDC have recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces?

A: Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops) with cleaners that you typically use. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.

- Practice strict infection control procedures if there is a case in your facility.
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/index.html
- Follow CDC's Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for Communities.
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

If there is a case in the facility

Q: What should administrators do if a resident or staff shows symptoms of COVID-19?

A: Ask residents to actively monitor (at least daily) for COVID-19 symptoms, including fever and respiratory symptoms (shortness of breath, new or change in cough). Administrators should work with local health authorities to establish procedures for those who become sick. Sick residents should avoid contact with individuals who are healthy. If you think someone may have COVID-19, ask them to self-isolate and you should contact local health officials.

Q: What should administrators do if there is a case of COVID-19 in our facility?

A: Work with local health authorities to communicate the possible exposure to residents, staff, and visitors. Clean and disinfect all shared facilities and high-touch surfaces. Limit visitors to essential staff and visitors. Staff and, when possible, visitors should be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 before entering the facility. Residents will need to actively monitor their health for COVID-19 symptoms. Cancel group activities. Residences that become ill should be advised to call the medical facility in advance of their visit.