

August 19, 2024 Weekly Clinical Update

Most of the information in this weekly update comes from information provided by AHCA NCAL in the weekly update. Your in-boxes are inundated every day...understandable, but some of those emails are important to review. Here are a few from this week's edition.

On August 9, 2024, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released an updated version of Appendix PP to incorporate the revised Facility Assessment rule and guidance previously released in QSO-24-13-NH on June 19, 2024. Other minor technical revisions were also made, such as updating regulatory references and locations.

CMS also released an updated Critical Element Pathway for Infection Control and Prevention and Extended Surveys. The updates to these pathways are minimal and only note the new location of the Facility Assessment rule. Finally, CMS updated the List of Revised F-tags.

All these resources can be found in the [Survey Resources folder](#), or the [CMS Nursing Home Page](#).

On another opportunity, The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is developing and testing an updated version of the [Surveys on Patient Safety Culture® \(SOPS®\) Nursing Home Survey](#). This new version will be approximately half the length of the current survey and will include revised items, new items, and updated composite measures. Throughout the development process, AHRQ will gather feedback from current users and technical experts and conduct a pilot test.

AHRQ is seeking nursing homes to participate in the pilot test of the SOPS Nursing Home Survey 2.0. Selected participants will receive the following benefits:

- Up to \$1,000 in compensation: \$500 for participation, with an additional \$500 for sites that achieve a response rate of at least 50%.
- Free administration of the SOPS Nursing Home Survey 2.0, including the Workplace Safety Supplemental Items, in August/September 2024.
- Feedback reports comparing their results with those of other pilot sites.

The survey is designed specifically for nursing home providers and staff, asking for their opinions about the culture of patient safety and healthcare quality within their facility. It is a reliable and valid tool that may be used to:

- Raise staff awareness about patient safety.
- Assess the current status of patient safety culture.
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement in patient safety culture.
- Examine trends in patient safety culture over time.
- Evaluate the cultural impact of patient safety initiatives and interventions.

Please note that this survey is not intended for use in assisted living facilities, community care facilities, or independent living facilities.

Just a reminder...providers still can access free COVID-19 tests through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Abbott BinaxNOW Test Kit Program. Skilled nursing facilities and assisted living communities continue to receive or are eligible to receive free monthly shipments of Abbott BinaxNOW over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 test kits. We anticipate this program will continue through the fall of 2025. Facilities and communities must have an active CLIA waiver to be eligible to participate in this program.

Shipments can be started and stopped, and test quantities can be increased or decreased by emailing TDX@hhs.gov. The email must include:

- Name of the facility
- Facility address
- CLIA waiver number
- Request (stop, start, increase, decrease)

Please note that it may take a week or two to update the shipping information.

CDC guidance requires anyone with even mild symptoms of COVID-19 to be tested. More information and detailed guidance can be found on [CDC's Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel](#).

If you have an influx of test kits and aren't sure how to use them, keep in mind that since the tests are OTC, you can provide them to visitors, staff, or residents for their personal use as well. The exact expiration dates for the tests can be found on the [FDA website](#).

For questions related to the HHS BinaxNOW Distribution Program, please email TDX@hhs.gov.

I also want to make sure all facilities understand the impact of Value Based Purchasing measures that take effect October 1, 2024. I would strongly encourage you and your RAI staff attend the educational opportunity for "SNF VBP Essentials" available from AHCA. The cost is minimal compared to the advantage offered by understanding the program.

The training delves into all eight measures which are:

- Hospital Readmissions
- Healthcare Acquired Infection Hospitalizations
- Long-stay Hospitalizations
- Discharge to Community
- Discharge Function Score
- Total Nurse Turnover
- Total Nurse Hours Per Resident Day
- Long-stay Falls with Major Injury

- [Registration for SNF VBP Essentials](#) is \$40 for members and \$80 for non-members. The course is approved for 1.25 NAB CE's and 1.00 contact hour through the Iowa Board of Nursing upon course completion.
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- Individuals must login to [ahcancaLED](#) and register for the course under their individual login. Members will need to login with their AHCA/NCAL usernames and passwords. For assistance obtaining AHCA/NCAL usernames and passwords, please e-mail educate@ahca.org with your name and facility contact information