

COVID-19 Focused Survey Items For Nursing Homes To Be Completed By July 31, 2020



On Monday June 1, 2020, CMS announced focused surveys for nursing homes related to infection control practices. **“While many nursing homes have performed well and demonstrated that it’s entirely possible to keep nursing home patients safe, we are outlining new instructions for state survey agencies and enforcement actions for nursing homes that are not following federal safety requirements,”** Seema Verma, CMS Administrator.

Infection control practices being targeted are based on trending from the most recent data collected related to COVID-19 in nursing homes.

- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provides additional funding for CMS to complete survey and work related to COVID-19. \$80 million of this fund was allocated to new resources now available for states to increase surveys.
- CMS is increasing enforcement via civil money penalties for those facilities with persistent violations due to infection control deficiencies.
- If states have not completed 100% of the survey focused on infection control by July 31, 2020, a corrective plan of action will be required. The plan of action will detail a strategy for completion of the missed surveys within 30 days.
- If after 30 days states haven’t performed said surveys in 100% of nursing homes, their CARES Act fiscal year 2021 allocation may be reduced by 10%.
 - ◆ Subsequent 30-day extensions could result in an addition 5% reduction
 - ◆ The funds from states who are not compliant will be redistributed to states that have completed 100% of their focused infection control surveys by July 31, 2020.
- CMS will help nursing homes implement infection control best practices with use of the Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs). Through education and training, QIOs will facilitate infection control prevention and management to help prevent COVID-19 contagion.

Read the [state survey memo here](#). Take a look at breakdown of the [Nursing Home COVID-19 data by state here](#).

Since the start of the PHE, providers have been inundated with waivers, guidance, executive orders, and best practice recommendations. The following month-by-month breakdown of actions by CMS is for your reference.

CMS COVID-19 Action Summary for Nursing Homes

MARCH 2020

- CMS issued new [guidance](#) related to the screening of entrants into nursing homes.
- CMS issued [guidance](#) related to the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- CMS issued [guidance](#) on the restriction of nonessential medical staff and all visitors except in certain limited situations.
- CMS [announced](#) a suspension of routine inspections, and an exclusive focus on immediate jeopardy situations and infection control inspections.
- CMS [announced](#) that hospitals, laboratories, and other entities can perform tests for COVID-19 on people at home and in other community-based settings outside of the hospital – including nursing homes.

APRIL 2020

- CMS issued [call to action](#) for nursing homes and state and local governments reinforcing infection control responsibilities and urging leaders to work closely with nursing homes on access to testing and PPE.
- CMS [announced](#) the agency will nearly double payment for certain lab tests that use high-throughput technologies to rapidly diagnose large numbers of COVID-19 cases.
- CMS [announced](#) it will require nursing homes to report cases of COVID-19 to all residents and their families, as well as directly to the CDC. On [May 1](#), CMS implemented the proposed policy in an Interim Final Rule. The rule became effective on May 8.
- CMS [announced](#) the formation of an independent Commission that will conduct a comprehensive assessment of nursing home response to COVID-19.

MAY 2020

- CMS released a [memorandum](#) to State Survey Agency directors providing more details on the new reporting requirements of the Interim Final Rule.
- CMS published a new informational [toolkit](#) comprised of recommendations and best practices from a variety of front line health care providers, governors' COVID-19 task forces, associations and other organizations and experts that is intended to serve as a catalogue of resources dedicated to addressing the specific challenges facing nursing homes as they combat COVID-19.
- CMS issued [guidance](#) for state and local officials on the reopening of nursing homes.

JUNE 2020

- CMS issued [guidance](#) to states on COVID-19 survey activities, CARES Act funding, enhanced enforcement for infection control deficiencies, and quality improvement activities in nursing homes. CMS also issued a [letter](#) to Governors.