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Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
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Circular Letter: DHCQ 11-01-543

TO: Long Term Care Facility Administrators
Medical Directors
Directors of Nursing

From: Alice Bonner, PhD, RN, 
Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

Date: January 18, 2011

Subject: **Long Term Care Health Maintenance Guidelines**

In accordance with State and Federal regulations at 105 CMR 150.005 (C) and 150.005 (F), 150.005 (G) and 42 CFR 483.25 respectively, residents must receive and the facility must provide the necessary care and services to attain or maintain the highest level of practicable physical, mental and psychosocial well-being.

Every resident shall have a complete admission physical exam and medical evaluation. Based on this information, the clinician shall develop a medical care plan that includes preventive or maintenance measures. Each resident shall be re-examined and re-evaluated by the attending physician, physician-nurse practitioner team or physician-physician assistant team to assure appropriate medical services.

In an effort to ensure that all residents in Long Term Care facilities attain/maintain the highest level of practicable physical well-being, the Department of Public Health (the Department or DPH) has compiled clinical guidelines on preventive health screenings for consideration during the initial evaluation or re-evaluation of each resident. These guidelines are not intended to substitute for clinical judgment or to override the needs or preferences of individual residents. Any recommendation for health screening must be individualized and considered within the context of the overall health, goals and preferences of each resident. It is an expectation that clinicians will discuss options and recommendations for preventive services with each resident

(and/or the resident's health care agent if appropriate) and will document decisions in the medical record. DPH surveyors will review the medical record for this documentation during the survey process.

A DPH task force composed of physicians, nurse practitioners, legislators, consumers, disability advocates, HCQ staff, nursing home representatives and others reviewed the scientific literature and consensus statements from several national professional organizations. The development of DPH's guidelines included examination of national standards for evidence-based medicine and practice guidelines, glidepaths across the lifespan and for specific populations such as pediatrics and older adults, and the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) guidelines. The available evidence was extensively analyzed and reviewed by clinicians within and outside of the Department of Public Health.

The Department will provide an initial, one time copy of the guidelines (see attachments). Subsequently, facilities are required to download and print the guidelines from the DPH website (www.mass.gov/dph/dhcq). If you have any questions or problems downloading or printing the guidelines, please contact Rodd Kelly at rodd.kelly@state.ma.us.