Overview and Objectives

- Massachusetts is acting to address staffing shortages that nursing facilities are experiencing due to COVID-19
- Through the COVID-19 Long Term Care Facility Staffing Team portal, nursing facilities can request staffing needs and potential staff can apply for jobs. The portal matches supply and demand, filling the need in high priority locations first.
- As of 5/14/2020, over 450 unique facilities have requested over 15,000 health care personnel through the portal, but only 1,900 applicants have registered to meet this demand.
- For all existing staff at nursing facilities, MassHealth is providing workforce support through increased payments to nursing facilities (10% increase for all nursing facilities across the state as part of the COVID-19 Health Care Provider Financial Relief Package, a 15% increase for facilities with a Dedicated COVID-19 Isolation Space, and an up to 50% additional increase to support infection control and accountability measures). It is the expectation of MassHealth that facilities will use these dollars to retain and provide additional compensation to existing staff.

Financing Structure

- MassHealth will fund signing bonuses of $500 for completing 2 weeks of work or $1,000 for one month for nursing facilities to pay to all staff who sign up or register through the portal for a new job.
- MassHealth will make supplemental payments to nursing facilities for the expense they incur.
- The estimated investment is over $1 million.
- Payments are subject to EOHHS audit of compliance with criteria stated below.

Qualifying Criteria

- Nursing facilities must hire through or have their hires register through the COVID-19 Long Term Care Facility Staffing Team portal.
  - MassHealth is funding signing bonuses through the portal because the portal matches supply and demand, filling the need in high priority locations first.
  - In addition, the portal provides MassHealth greater transparency into hiring.
  - Staff hired through the portal since its launch on 4/8 are retroactively eligible
- Eligible staffing types include: RN, LPN, CNA/Patient Care Tech, Resident Care Assistant (RCA), OT, OTA, PT, PTA, LICSW, activities staff.
- Employment status can be as a W-2 employee or independent contractor, provided that the contract is directly between the facility and the staff person, not through a temporary staffing agency.
- The nursing facility must submit documentation 30 days after the employee’s start date to MassHealth to verify the following:
  - The bonus was paid to the new employee
  - The employee worked for at least 64 hours at the facility within 15 days of the employee’s start date to qualify for the $500 bonus or 128 hours at the facility within 30 days of the employee’s start date for the $1,000 bonus
• Staff must be hired by **June 12** to be eligible.

**Verification Process**

• **Qualifying criteria** will be posted on the portal to ensure applicants are aware of bonus requirements

• Facilities will be eligible for the **supplemental payment** by submitting the following documentation to MassHealth:
  
  - List of names of eligible employees
  - Attestation document verifying criteria listed above

• Hired staff who believe they were eligible but did not receive a bonus can notify EOHHS using the email addresses below. An email will be added to the **portal** to serve as a point of contact.

• Staff who would otherwise be eligible for the signing bonus based on the qualifying criteria, but who become COVID-19 positive during the 15 day or 30 day duration and therefore cannot meet the 64 or 128 hour eligibility criterion will still be eligible for the signing bonus.

**Questions**

• For applicants or nursing facilities who have questions on this policy, please email EOHHS at **Amar.Parikh@MassMail.State.MA.US** and **Meera.Ramamoorthy@MassMail.State.MA.US**.