



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Office of Medicaid
www.mass.gov/masshealth

MassHealth
Nursing Facility Bulletin 146
May 2020

TO: Nursing Facilities Participating in MassHealth

FROM: Amanda Cassel Kraft, Acting Medicaid Director

RE: COVID-19 Baseline Testing Requirements for Nursing Facilities

Background

In light of the state of emergency declared in the Commonwealth due to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, MassHealth is implementing measures to protect against the spread of COVID-19. Specifically, MassHealth is requiring that nursing facilities complete baseline testing of staff and residents for COVID-19 between April 8, 2020, and May 25, 2020. To demonstrate completion of testing, the facility must submit the attestation in Appendix A attached to this nursing facility provider bulletin by May 25, 2020. Failure to complete the baseline testing requirement will result in ineligibility for certain supplemental payments under a forthcoming administrative bulletin to be issued by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) (the “accountability and supports administrative bulletin”).

To complete the baseline testing, facilities may either use state-directed testing methods through the COVID Command Congregate Care Mobile Testing Call Center, or use facility-organized testing methods, by determining its own accredited means of completing testing at its own cost. These methods are described in more detail below.

If the facility opts for facility-organized testing and conducts such testing on or after April 27, 2020, the facility may be eligible for additional supplemental payments related to the completion of such testing. Supplemental payments for facility-organized testing will be calculated according to the methodology described in another forthcoming administrative bulletin to be issued by EOHHS (the “baseline testing administrative bulletin”).

This nursing facility bulletin applies to nursing facilities that are enrolled as MassHealth providers.

This bulletin will remain effective for the duration of the state of emergency declared via [Executive Order No. 591](#).

Baseline Testing Requirement

EOHHS is requiring that all MassHealth nursing facility providers test a minimum of 90 percent of their total residents and a minimum of 90 percent of total staff for COVID-19 between April 8, 2020, and May 25, 2020, with such total staff and total residents determined as of May 7, 2020, in accordance with the definitions below. Nursing facilities must complete this testing in accordance with requirements set forth below.

**MassHealth
Nursing Facility Bulletin 146
May 2020
Page 2 of 4**

For the purposes of the testing requirement established by this nursing facility bulletin, EOHHS defines total staff to include all clinical and non-clinical full-time, part-time, and per diem employees and contractors employed by the nursing facility on May 7, 2020, but not including staff employed through temporary nurse staffing agencies or staff provided at the Commonwealth's expense (such as those provided by EOHHS through a clinical rapid response team or the Massachusetts National Guard). Staff that are per diem employees will be included in the definition if they had worked at the facility within one week before or are scheduled to work at the facility within one week after May 7, 2020. In order to meet the staff testing requirement, the nursing facility must ensure that at least 90 percent of total staff, as such term is defined by this paragraph, are tested between April 8, 2020, and May 25, 2020.

For the purposes of the testing requirement established by this nursing facility bulletin, EOHHS defines total residents to include all residents of the nursing facility as of May 7, 2020, except those that are on medical or non-medical leave of absence. In order to meet the resident-testing requirement, the nursing facility must ensure that at least 90 percent of total residents, as such term is defined by this paragraph, are tested between April 8, 2020, and May 25, 2020.

While the Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control recommend that testing of all residents and staff occur on the same date to the extent possible, the nursing facility may count staff members and residents tested between April 8, 2020, and May 25, 2020, toward the 90 percent testing thresholds established by this nursing facility bulletin, provided that the nursing facility has documented evidence of the completed testing for such residents and staff, and provided that each individual staff member and resident is counted only once, even if such individual has been tested more than once during that time period.

State-directed testing methods include testing conducted by the Massachusetts National Guard or a state-contracted mobile testing provider. Nursing facilities may request state-directed testing by calling the COVID Command Congregate Care Mobile Testing Call Center. Facility-organized testing methods include any non-state-directed testing by which the facility secures testing for its residents or staff, including the collection of specimens sufficient for diagnostic testing, the processing of a COVID-19 diagnostic test by a qualified laboratory, and the furnishing of results to all appropriate parties in accordance with Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control guidance. Nursing facilities may partner or contract with entities including but not limited to hospitals, community health centers, ambulance/emergency medical services providers, clinical laboratories, or other entities dedicated to providing COVID-19 testing services. Nursing facilities may, but are not required to, partner with other MassHealth-enrolled providers, and eligible MassHealth-enrolled partner providers may separately bill MassHealth for the processing of the COVID-19 test itself, though not for other associated services such as specimen collection. The nursing facility must pay its partner provider directly for those associated services.

Nursing facilities that use qualifying facility-organized testing between April 27, 2020, and May 25, 2020, will be eligible for supplemental payments related to the completion of such testing under the forthcoming EOHHS baseline testing administrative bulletin. However, nursing facilities that utilize a state-directed testing method between May 11, 2020, and May 25, 2020, will not be eligible for

**MassHealth
Nursing Facility Bulletin 146
May 2020
Page 3 of 4**

supplemental payments related to any facility-organized testing completed by the nursing facility during that time period.

State-directed testing will not be available for more than one baseline testing date on or after May 11, 2020, and will not be available to nursing facilities that are seeking supplemental payments for any facility-organized testing to be completed on or after May 11, 2020.

Nursing facilities must complete the attestation and reporting requirements of this nursing facility bulletin, whether they use state-directed testing or facility-organized testing. Nursing facilities that fail to meet these requirements will not be eligible for certain supplemental payments under the forthcoming accountability and supports administrative bulletin.

Reporting Requirements and Attestation Requirements

An administrator or other appropriate representative from each nursing facility must submit a signed and scanned copy of the executed attestation, attached to this nursing facility bulletin as Appendix A, as well as a report, including all of the information described below, via the [CHIA submissions portal](#), on or before May 25, 2020. **A login is not required to access this portal.**

The required report must be submitted using the web form on the CHIA submissions portal and the signed and scanned attestation must be uploaded when submitting the web form. Specifically, the nursing facility must report:

1. The number of total residents and staff as of May 7, 2020;
2. The number of residents and staff the facility tested using a facility-organized testing method between April 27, 2020, and May 10, 2020, if any;
3. The number of residents and staff the facility tested using a state-directed testing method between April 27, 2020, and May 10, 2020, if any;
4. The number of residents and staff the facility tested using a facility-organized testing method between May 11, 2020, and May 25, 2020, if any;
5. The number of residents and staff the facility tested using a state-directed testing method between May 11, 2020, and May 25, 2020, if any;
6. The number of total residents:
 - a. who were tested for COVID-19 by any method between April 8, 2020, and May 25, 2020;
 - b. who tested positive for COVID-19;
 - c. who tested negative for COVID-19;
 - d. who had inconclusive testing results; and
7. The number of total staff:
 - a. who were tested for COVID-19 by any method between April 8, 2020, and May 25, 2020;
 - b. who tested positive for COVID-19;
 - c. who tested negative for COVID-19;
 - d. who had inconclusive testing results.
8. All partner providers or entities involved in any of the completed testing described above.

**MassHealth
Nursing Facility Bulletin 146
May 2020
Page 4 of 4**

Nursing facilities that have not received complete test results by May 25, 2020, must still submit the report with all the other requested information by May 25, 2020, must state in the report the number of results that they are still waiting to receive, and resubmit the report with the required testing results through the CHIA submissions portal within two business days of receipt of the completed results.

All information included in the reports is subject to verification and audit by EOHHS.

MassHealth Website

This bulletin is available on the [MassHealth Provider Bulletins](#) web page.

To sign up to receive email alerts when MassHealth issues new bulletins and transmittal letters, send a blank email to join-masshealth-provider-pubs@listserv.state.ma.us. No text in the body or subject line is needed.

Questions

If you have questions about the information in this bulletin, please email your inquiry to Caitlin Sullivan at caitlin.sullivan2@massmail.state.ma.us.

Appendix A

Nursing Facility Provider Attestation to COVID-19 Baseline Testing Policies

I, _____, hereby certify under the pains and penalties of perjury that I am the administrator or other duly authorized officer or representative of _____, located at _____, (hereinafter “nursing facility”) and that the information provided in this attestation is a true and accurate representation of the COVID-19 testing procedure implemented and COVID-19 testing results at such nursing facility.

Specifically, I represent and warrant that:

- The nursing facility completed baseline testing for COVID-19 for a minimum of 90 percent of total residents and 90 percent of total staff by May 25, 2020, in accordance with all applicable requirements of MassHealth *Nursing Facility Bulletin 146*.
- The report accompanying this attestation and submitted to EOHHS via the [CHIA submissions portal](#) to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of MassHealth *Nursing Facility Bulletin 146* are complete and accurate.

Under the pains and penalties of perjury, I hereby certify that the above information is true and correct.

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please submit a scanned copy of the executed attestation via the [CHIA submissions portal](#) on or before May 25, 2020.

The nursing facility should maintain the original executed copy of this attestation, along with the accompanying documentation, receipts, invoices, and report, in its files.