



Department of Health

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DATE: April 4, 2020

TO: All Adult Care Facilities and Nursing Homes

Guidance for Resident and Family Communication in Adult Care Facilities (ACFs) and Nursing Homes (NHs)

Please distribute immediately to:
All ACFs and NHs

The Department strongly encourages you to implement a communication protocol for both residents and their families, loved ones, and guardians unable to visit the resident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Best practices to consider when creating a communication protocol include:

For facilities with either a suspected or positive case (resident, staff, or other)

- The same day the facility learns of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, communicate to the residents and residents' families, loved ones, and guardians that an individual who has been in the facility is suspected of having, or has been diagnosed with, COVID-19. Personal identifying information cannot be disclosed in the communication.
- Send an initial letter/email regarding COVID-19 to residents and their families, loved ones, and guardians, outlining infection control policies and procedures. If possible, follow-up with a call to families and speak with the residents, in-person.
- Maintain routine communication with residents in-person, if possible, and with families, either via email or another electronic platform, regarding the facility's efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Incorporate questions and answers in communication to demonstrate transparency.
- Suggest that individuals submit their questions to the Department at icp@health.ny.gov, covidadultcareinfo@health.ny.gov, or covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov.

For facilities without an exposure issue

- Periodically meet with residents and send communication to families regarding the facility's status and measures being taken to protect the residents and staff from COVID-19.
- Maintain up-to-date information on your website. Information can be found at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>.
- Share relevant content on the facility's social media accounts.
- Suggest that individuals submit their questions to the Department at icp@health.ny.gov, covidadultcareinfo@health.ny.gov, or covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov.