



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

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## **MDHHS Issues Order to Protect Nursing Home Residents and Staff from COVID-19**

*Order requires testing and reporting; additional efforts address accuracy of nursing facility data, staffing, infection control practices*

**LANSING, MICH.** To help protect residents and staff at nursing facilities from COVID-19, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon today issued an [Order](#) requiring regular testing and timely and accurate reporting of cases, deaths, personal protective equipment and staffing shortages.

“We took the time to make today’s report as accurate as possible,” Gordon said. “And now we’re doing everything in our power to protect nursing facility residents through mandatory testing, support for adequate staffing, and new efforts at infection control.”

“As we continue working to protect Michigan families from the spread of COVID-19 and lower the chance of a second wave, we must do everything we can to protect our most vulnerable Michiganders and those frontline workers who care for them,” said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. “Continuous testing and proper staffing are crucial to that effort. As we continue to safely reopen sectors of our economy, Director Gordon and I will keep working with our partners in health care to ensure protections for our most vulnerable populations and for the brave men and women on the front lines fighting this virus.”

The Order requires nursing facilities to conduct the following COVID-19 testing for residents and staff:

- Initial testing of all residents and staff.
- Testing of all new or returning residents during intake unless tested within 72 hours of intake.
- Testing of any resident or staff member with symptoms or suspected exposure.
- Weekly testing of all previously negative residents and staff in facilities with any positive cases among residents or staff, until 14 days after the last new positive result.
- Weekly testing of all staff in regions of medium or higher risk on the [MI Safe Start Map](#).
- Testing of all staff in Regions 1 through 5 and 7, at least once between the date of this order and July 3, 2020.

“We are appreciative that the governor continues to work with us and adopt our recommendations,” said State Rep. Leslie Love who leads the House Democratic Nursing Home Hub Taskforce. “As she continues to refine guidelines and protections for the safety of nursing home residents and staff, this will go a long way to preventing the spread of COVID-19 among our most vulnerable.”

“AARP strongly supports the testing mandate in Michigan nursing homes,” said Paula D. Cunningham, AARP state director. “The sad fate of so many older adults in long-term care facilities is both heartbreaking and infuriating. Setting up and implementing a comprehensive plan for testing of staff and residents is among the essential steps necessary to overturn this abject tragedy.”

Nursing facilities are required to submit plans for testing by June 22 and to implement those plans by June 29. Facility staff who are not permitted to come to work because they test positive for COVID-19 are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits and Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. The Unemployment Insurance Agency is committed to working with nursing facilities throughout the process of filing for unemployment on behalf of their employees.

MDHHS also announced several additional efforts to protect nursing facility residents:

- Direct support for rapid response staff who can provide immediate support to long-term care facilities facing urgent staffing shortages due to COVID. Beginning in Southeast and West Michigan, the Department will help to make available, for up to 14 days, registered nurses, certified nursing assistants, personal care aides, and other key staff.
- Coordination with [Doctors Without Borders](#) to help identify long-term care facilities in need of assistance with their infection prevention and control practices. Doctors Without Borders is sending mobile teams to assess facility practices and provide tailored recommendations for improvement.
- Improved targeting of the Infection Prevention Resource and Assessment Team (IPRAT), which is helping nursing facilities complete the CDC Infection Control and Assessment Response Tool. More than 300 have completed the tool to date. IPRAT will now target its support to Regional Hubs and other facilities based on data from LARA. At the same time the Department will begin decommissioning some regional hubs due to reduced demand.

Additional information about these efforts is available on the MDHHS [website](#).

In addition to the measures above, MDHHS is announcing the results of its comprehensive effort to validate nursing facility data on COVID-related cases and deaths. As of June 14, there have been 7,163 cases and 1,947 deaths among patients in nursing facilities with 4,919 patients recovered or recovering. In addition, there have been 3,133 cases and 20 deaths among staff. This represents cumulative data recorded since Jan. 1. These numbers reflect an extensive data validation effort led by DHHS, involving outreach to each of the state’s nursing facilities to confirm key data fields, ensure that facilities were aware of state and federal reporting expectations, and troubleshoot barriers to reporting.

The Emergency Order reiterates reporting requirements and formally establishes penalties for non-compliance to ensure timely and accurate data reporting. Facilities that do not report required data are subject to a \$1,000 fine for each violation or for each day that a violation continues. Any violation of the order by a facility regulated by LARA shall be referred to the agency for determination whether to pursue additional enforcement action as it deems appropriate.

Gov. Whitmer today also signed [Executive Order 2020-123](#), which extends her previous order protecting staff and residents in long-term care facilities from the spread of COVID-19, including by ensuring that employees who stay home when exhibiting symptoms are protected from adverse action. The order establishes a system of regional hubs for care of COVID-19-affected residents, and requires nursing homes to take special precautions when a resident exhibits symptoms of COVID-19. The governor’s order extends through July 12, 2020.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](#) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](#).

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