

Nursing Homes Must Report COVID-19 Cases Directly To CDC, As Well As To Families and Residents

Articles, COVID 19: Answers to Business Challenges April 20, 2020

On Sunday evening (April 19, 2020), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued guidance regarding new requirements to report cases of COVID-19. A copy of the CMS publication can be found here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-26-nh.pdf>

Prior to this guidance, nursing homes were required to report to state and local health departments suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, residents with severe respiratory infection resulting in hospitalization or death, or more than three residents or staff with new onset of respiratory symptoms within 72-hours of each other. Now, facilities will also be required to report this information to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CMS and the CDC will soon provide specific direction as to how this reporting will take place.

In addition, CMS is also requiring nursing homes to inform residents and their representatives about the conditions at the facility. This requires notification of residents and their representatives within 12 hours of the occurrence of a single confirmed case of COVID-19, or if three or more residents or staff have a new onset of respiratory symptoms within 72 hours. This information must also include mitigation actions being taken to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission, including if normal operations at the facility will be changed in any way. Information released must be in accordance with privacy regulations and statutes.

Failure to follow these guidelines could result in an enforcement action by CMS. If your facility has any questions about reporting requirements, please feel free to contact Mike Cassidy.