The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released new guidance to state and local governments and long-term care facilities (i.e., nursing homes) to aid in limiting the spread of COVID-19 (press release). The guidance contains five new recommendations. Details follow.

1. **Ensure compliance with all CMS and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance re: infection control.** CMS highlights in particular the CDC guidance on hand hygiene. CMS also encourages facilities to reference long-term care facility guidance dedicated to COVID-19 measures and guidance on conserving personal protective equipment (PPE). Last, CMS points to its recently issued survey reprioritization announcement, which included a self-assessment tool for nursing homes to ensure they are in compliance with all infection control guidelines.

2. **State and local leaders should consider the needs of nursing homes re: PPE and COVID-19 test kits.** CMS reiterates that Medicare is now covering COVID-19 testing when furnished to eligible beneficiaries by certified laboratories.

3. **Implement symptom screening for all immediately.** CMS states that facilities should limit access points and that all entrances should have screening stations in place. The agency further states that facilities should conduct screening in accordance with CDC screening guidelines.

4. **All staff should use appropriate PPE to the extent available.** CMS specifies that if COVID-19 transmission is detected in a facility, then all staff should wear full PPE for the care of all residents, regardless of whether a resident is showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19. When possible, CMS states, all facility residents should cover their noses and mouths when staff are in their room (CMS adds residents can use tissues for doing so).

5. **Facilities should use separate staffing teams for COVID-19 positive residents and designate separate facilities or units dedicated to COVID-19 positive residents.** CMS states that consistent staffing assignments for all residents can enhance staff’s familiarity with assigned residents’ conditions and ability to identify changes in condition. CMS also adds that any separate COVID-19 facilities and units must be able to maintain strict infection control practices and testing protocols. Last, CMS includes a reminder that facilities should inform residents and their families of limitations of their access to and ability to leave and re-enter the facility in COVID-19 positive situations.

We hope this brief update is helpful. Please let us know if you have any questions.

**WHG Contacts for Inquiries**  
Josh LaRosa: josh@wynnehealth.com; (703) 309-4248  
Taylor Cowey: taylor@wynnehealth.com; (203) 848-7720