



Department of Public Health

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Dee Margo

LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY DIRECTIVE

Effective Immediately

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CITY MANAGER

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Dear Healthcare Provider:

Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities have been severely impacted by COVID-19 across the nation and El Paso is not an exemption. Aggressive interventions and preventive efforts are necessary to limit COVID-19 exposure and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within nursing facilities, particularly those facilities with COVID-19 positive residents. Your facility has been determined as high-risk for the spread of COVID-19, thus requiring a public health intervention and directive.

Under the Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 2 Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Act, Chapter 81, the City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH), as the Local Health Authority for the City-County of El Paso may issue directives, as an effort to protect the health of the El Paso community. Therefore, we are directing your facility to adhere to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Opening Up American Guidance - PHASE I described under Attachment A. In addition to PHASE I requirements, facilities are required to conduct full decontamination of a facility after a cluster (2 COVID-19 positive persons or more) has been identified. If, due to lack of financial resources a facility finds the decontamination requirement a hardship, please submit request for decontamination support to EOC-Logistics@elpasotexas.gov for consideration.

Facilities which have conducted baseline COVID-19 testing on all residents and staff and received negative results for all, should only perform monthly testing for a period of three (3) months. If at any point a facility identifies a positive case, weekly testing should be performed as per this directive.

The health of our community is our utmost concern. Rest assure the DPH will support you and your staff with any questions you may have about requirements under this directive. Should you have any questions, please contact Angela Mora, Acting Director at: angela.mora@elpasotexas.gov.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Hector I. Ocaranza, MD, MPH., Health Authority

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DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES

Attachment A

Phase I of Opening up America	Criteria for Implementation	Visitation and Service Considerations	Surveys that will be performed at each phase
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most facilities are in a posture that can be described as their highest level of vigilance, regardless of transmission within their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation generally prohibited, except for compassionate care situations. In those limited situations, visitors are screened and additional precautions are taken, including social distancing, and hand hygiene (e.g., use alcohol-based hand rub upon entry). All visitors must wear a cloth face covering or facemask for the duration of their visit. • Restricted entry of non-essential healthcare personnel. • Communal dining limited (for COVID-19 negative or asymptomatic residents only), but residents may eat in the same room with social distancing (limited number of people at tables and spaced by at least 6 feet). • Non-medically necessary trips outside the building should be avoided. <p>Restrict group activities, but some activities may be conducted (for COVID-19 negative or asymptomatic residents only) with social distancing, hand hygiene, and use of a cloth face covering or facemask.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For medically necessary trips away from of the facility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The resident must wear a cloth face covering or facemask; and ○ The facility must share the resident’s COVID-19 status with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation of complaints alleging there is an immediate serious threat to the resident’s health and safety (known as Immediate Jeopardy) • Revisit surveys to confirm the facility has removed any Immediate Jeopardy findings • Focused infection control surveys • Initial survey to certify that the provider has met the required conditions to participate in the Medicare Program (initial certification surveys) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any State-based priorities (e.g., localized “hot spots,” “strike” teams, etc.)

		<p>transportation service and entity with whom the resident has the appointment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% screening of all persons entering the facility and all staff at the beginning of each shift:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Temperature checks• Ensure all outside persons entering building have cloth face covering or facemask.• Questionnaire about symptoms and potential exposure<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of any signs or symptoms• 100% screening for all residents:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Temperature checks○ Questions about and observation for other signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (at least daily)• Universal source control for everyone in the facility. Residents and visitors entering for compassionate care wear cloth face covering or facemask.• All staff wear appropriate PPE when they are interacting with residents, to the extent PPE is available and consistent with CDC guidance on optimization of PPE. Staff wear cloth face covering if facemask is not indicated.• All staff are tested weekly. All residents are tested upon identification of an individual with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or if staff have tested positive for COVID-19. Weekly testing continues until all residents test negative.	
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