



Department of
Aging

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Ursel J. McElroy, Director



Department of
Health

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Lance Himes, Interim Director

July 30, 2020

Dear Ohio Assisted Living Administrators:

We are writing to announce a statewide COVID-19 testing initiative for Ohio's assisted living facilities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that due to the congregate nature and population served, assisted living facilities are at high risk for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, spreading among their residents. Often, when a new-onset infection is identified, there are others in the facility who are also infected but who do not yet have symptoms. Rapid action to identify, isolate, and test others who might be infected is critical to prevent COVID-19 spread in your facilities.

As we know, experience has demonstrated that unrecognized asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic infections are likely contributors to transmission in congregate settings. To support Ohio's facilities, the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Aging have secured a testing provider who is able to offer baseline saliva testing to all assisted living staff and residents at no cost to the facilities. We are pleased with this testing option as the tests can be self-performed or performed with assistance, under the observance of your licensed medical staff. The test themselves are minimally invasive and provide reliable results in about 48 hours upon the lab's receipt.

We have worked collaboratively with your respective associations to develop a testing program that supports your restart and sets you up for success. We will ship tests and pre-paid shipping supplies to your address, you will be given access to a web-based test portal to enter basic information and to track your results, and you will receive training so that you are prepared. We have also contemplated and developed contingency plans for situations that may arise during testing. Next week, informational webinars are planned for facility leaders and for licensed members of your staff who will monitor the self-administered tests. We ask that you and your staff register now for the appropriate [webinar](#).

We are confident that you agree with the importance of this initiative for the safety of your residents, staff, and leadership, as well as your residents' families. As we focus on safety while navigating this pandemic, easy, accessible, on-demand testing is a must. If this first round proves successful, there may be subsequent testing, which can be more easily and readily done since a "testing" relationship has already been established. We look forward to achieving 100% participation of all assisting living facilities across Ohio.

Sincerely,

Ursel J. McElroy
Director

Lance Himes
Interim Director

Questions about COVID-19? Visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH for answers.