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THE SOCIETY FOR POST-ACUTE AND LONG-TERM CARE MEDICINE

WWW.ALMDA.ORG

CMS issues COVID-19 reporting and testing requirements for Nursing Homes

Testing of staff for COVID-19 required

On Aug. 25, CMS announced sweeping regulatory changes that require nursing homes to test staff for COVID-19. They are also requiring laboratories – including nursing homes using point-of-care testing devices – to report diagnostic test results as required by the CARES Act. The new rules also require hospitals to report COVID-19 cases to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



CMS is directing surveyors to inspect nursing homes for adherence to the new testing requirements. Facilities that do not comply with the new requirements will be cited for non-compliance and required to implement a plan of correction. Facilities may face enforcement sanctions based on the severity of the non-compliance, such as civil money penalties in excess of \$400 per day, or over \$8,000 for an instance of noncompliance. Alternatively, they could also face Denial of Payment for New Admissions.

Through this interim final rule CMS is making the surveillance testing requirement easier and less costly for nursing homes by providing point-of-care testing devices and test kits to each of the Medicare- and Medicaid-certified nursing homes in the nation that has received a waiver from the Clinical Lab Improvement Amendments to conduct low-complexity testing.

To ensure compliance, reporting is now part of the as Conditions of Participation. CMS can terminate or suspend all funding on from the Medicare and Medicaid programs – for failing to report data needed to support broader surveillance of COVID-19.

CMS' new rules further require, in accordance with the CARES Act, that laboratories – including hospital labs and nursing homes using point-of-care testing – to report COVID-19 test results to state and local health departments.

Make plans to join us for ALMDA's Mid Winter Conference Jan. 23, 2021

ALMDA's Board is monitoring coronavirus developments in anticipation of the 2021 Mid Winter Conference. We will follow recommendations from the Alabama Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control in determining whether to conduct the meeting in-person or on-line.

Please make plans to join on Saturday, Jan. 23, in Birmingham or on-line via Zoom.

More details will be shared via email and on ALMDA's website, www.almda.org, as they become available.



Registration will open Oct. 1.

**Register online at
[www.tinyurl.com/
ALMDA2021](http://www.tinyurl.com/ALMDA2021)**

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ALMDA 2021 Membership dues billing to begin in October

Membership dues renewals for ALMDA will begin the first week of October. You may use the form on page 5 or, after Oct. 1 you may renew using the online form at www.tinyurl.com/ALMDA2021. *Note: You may pay your dues without registering for the 2021 conferences.*

Our power is strengthened with each member's support and involvement. Now more than ever, your membership is critical to our profession and the patients for whom we care. 

Survey: Alabama medical practices hit hard by COVID-19

www.alabamamedicine.org

In just a few months, the coronavirus pandemic changed the way we function as a society and fundamentally altered our healthcare delivery system. It has exacerbated weaknesses in the infrastructure of health care and exposed limitations in current policies at a time when costs are rising and access to care is dwindling.

The Medical Association of the State of Alabama conducted a survey to determine the impact of COVID-19 on medical practices and care delivery. The survey identified several key findings:

- Patient volume is down leading to concerns that Alabamians are not going to their physician for routine care;
- More than 70% of respondents said COVID-19 has had a severe impact on practice finances, causing layoffs and furloughs and limiting access to care;
- More than 71% said they're likely to continue providing telemedicine if insurers continue covering those services; and
- More than 71% are concerned about the potential liability from lack of PPE and patients canceling or delaying procedures and other medical care.

In light of the findings of the survey, the Medical Association is recommending several public policy proposals:

- Allocate state stimulus funds to reimburse practices for COVID-19 related expenses;
- Expand testing, PPE, and cleaning supply availability;
- Continue coverage of telemedicine by insurers at existing rates; and
- Enact "safe harbor" legislation to provide liability protections to health care providers.

Read the full report at www.alabamamedicine.org. 

COVID-19 reporting, continued

Test results include demographic data, such as race and ethnicity information. If a laboratory or testing provider does not report the required information, CMS will impose a civil money penalty. This change improves accountability and transparency while allowing CMS to take aggressive enforcement action against laboratories that fail to provide the required data. The data is needed by federal, state and local officials to conduct effective surveillance of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CMS also is revising its previous policy that allowed repeated COVID-19 testing for Medicare beneficiaries without physician oversight during the public health emergency. The revised policy provides that, after an initial test, Medicare will cover further COVID-19 tests with a treating physician or non-physician practitioner order. This change helps ensure that beneficiaries receive appropriate medical attention if they need multiple tests. It also helps stop fraudsters from performing or billing for unnecessary tests.

More information can be found on the [COVID-19 Emergency](#) page.

Additional Resources

COVID-19 [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on Medicare Fee-for-Service Billing
[Coronavirus waivers & flexibilities](#)
[CMS Interim Final Rule](#) 

Nursing homes given federal go-ahead to allow more visitors

www.npr.org

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has lifted the ban on visitors in long-term care settings. The restriction has been in place since March in an effort to control outbreaks of the coronavirus.

Advocates for nursing home residents and family organizations have been clamoring for a repeal, noting the many residents have suffered anxiety or depression, as well as physical or mental decline, since the ban was imposed. The issue was also raised in the report of the Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes, which became public on Sept. 16.

Since March, family members have only been allowed to visit their loved ones for so-called compassionate care. This was interpreted by many nursing homes to mean end-of-life situations. The new guidance expands the criteria to include residents who were living with their family before admission to the nursing home and are now struggling with the change in environment, residents who need family members to provide encouragement with eating or drinking, and residents experiencing emotional distress.

Now, all nursing homes may allow outdoor visits with social distancing, as a few states have recently allowed. And most nursing homes may allow indoor visits as long as there have been no new COVID-19 infections in the past two weeks and the infection rate in the surrounding county is no more than 10 percent. But CMS recommends that nursing homes limit how many visitors a resident can have at one time, as well as limiting the number of visitors that can be in the facility at once.

Also, nursing home residents may once again participate in social activities and communal dining, as long as there is social distancing and residents wear masks.

A nursing facility that fails to allow visitation without a valid medical reason can suffer sanctions.

The fines that the government collects for violations can now be used for facilities to buy technology that aids in family communication, as well as partitions, tents, or other equipment that can help prevent transmission of the virus. 



Photo by Kumar Vivek on Unsplash

Providers enrolled in ImmPRINT can order free adult flu vaccine



Beginning Oct. 1, healthcare providers can order a minimum of 100 doses of free adult flu vaccine as an enrolled ImmPRINT provider. The free vaccine is available for current and new ImmPRINT providers.

If you are a nursing home or independent pharmacy, the Alabama Department of Public Health Immunization Division can assist with paying for new interfaces to ImmPRINT by emailing immprint@adph.state.al.us.

Adult Flu Vaccine Target Audience

- Adults aged 19 years of age and older at-risk for flu complications including adults in congregate living and other high-density living settings.
- Adults who are part of a coverage disparity group, race, sex, or socioeconomic status.

Free Ancillary Supplies

Masks, Needles, Sharps Container, Coolers, Face shields, Syringes, Alcohol swabs, Digital data loggers, Gloves, Band-aids, No touch thermometers, and Tents

Available Influenza Vaccine Ordering via ImmPRINT after Oct. 1, 2020 100 doses per order minimum

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|--------|----------------------|
| AstraZeneca | FluMist-Quad | P Free | ETA October |
| GSK | Fluarix-Quad | P Free | ETA October-December |
| GSK | FluLaval-Quad | P Free | ETA October-December |
| Sanofi | Fluzone-Quad | | ETA November-January |
| Sanofi | Fluzone-Quad | P Free | ETA November-January |
| Seqirus USA, Inc. | Flucelvax-Quad | P Free | ETA October-December |
| Seqirus USA, Inc. | Flucelvax-Quad | | ETA October-December |
| Seqirus USA, Inc. | Afluria-Quad | P Free | ETA October-December |

**All administered free adult flu doses must be entered into ImmPRINT via interface (HL7 connectivity) or manually within 72 hours for accountability purposes to receive more free vaccine. Additionally, reimbursement billing for the vaccine cost is not permitted, but an administrative fee can be requested.*

Enroll in ImmPRINT at <https://siis.state.al.us/ImmPrint/login/login.aspx>. 

PALTC21 MARCH 11-14

VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE



AMDA announces fully virtual PALTC21

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has led the AMDA Board of Directors to make the difficult decision to commit to a fully virtual annual conference in 2021. There will not be an in-person component in San Antonio, but long-term care providers are encouraged to make plans to join the conference virtually on March 11-14, 2021.

The board came to this decision after considering its responsibility to maintain the health and safety of attendees, residents, staff, the local community, and the society as a whole. Given what is known about the virus and how it is transmitted, the Board recognized that holding a traditional in-person conference would not provide the experience our attendees expect due to capacity

restrictions and other measures that would need to be implemented to create a safer event.

While it is disappointing not to be able to meet in person for the second year in a row, AMDA staff have planned an interactive, engaging, and meaningful virtual conference that will reach a much broader community of PALTC professionals who would not typically attend an in-person conference.

Registration will open in November. If you have questions, please reach out to education@paltc.org.

2020 PALTC Conference Recordings are Available

Missed the Conference? You can purchase the conference recordings and

earn valuable credits.

Conference education sessions were recorded and are presented in an online forum with audio and PowerPoint presentations. You will also have access to handouts from the sessions.

More than 80 hours of CME credit* are available from the recordings, as well as CMD credits and MOC points.

PALTC20 Conference Recordings

*Accreditation

AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

Become a Certified Medical Director

Whether you've been working in the field for one year or 20, the Core Curriculum on Medical Direction in Post-Acute and Long-Term Care (PALTC) can provide you with the tools you need to succeed. The Core Curriculum is the only program of its kind, offering comprehensive instruction on management and leadership within the PALTC setting. The curriculum also offers CME, ABIM MOC, and CMD management credits.

The American Board of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (ABPLM) currently administers a certification program for Certified Medical Directors (CMD) in post-acute and long-term care settings. Certification is valid for six years. Click the links below for information on:

- [Eligibility pathways](#)
- [Initial and recertification eligibility requirements](#)
- [Applications for initial or recertification](#)

Reinstatement

CMDs whose certification has lapsed may apply for reinstatement via a waiver request and submission of a reinstatement application. Please contact the [ABPLM Director](#) to discuss reinstatement eligibility process. Download the [Reinstatement Eligibility Requirements and Application](#).

CMD Re-certification

If you are due to recertify your CMD certification in 2020, please note that the ABPLM Board of Directors has extended a two-year grace period, through June or December 2022 (depending on your recertification due date) to submit your CMD application. Your CMD credential will remain active during the grace period.

Because of the shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, ABPLM will accept any ABPLM pre-approved CME earned in 2020 as live hours. You may, therefore, claim live credits from the 2020 AMDA Conference whether you participated in the live virtual conference, or from recordings of sessions.

ALMDA News & Notes

Alabama Medical Directors Association

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The Alabama Medical Directors Association (ALMDA) is the professional association of physicians and other professionals practicing in the long-term care continuum and is dedicated to excellence in patient care by providing education, advocacy, information and professional development.

The articles contained in ALMDA News & Notes are meant to provoke thought and comment and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the members, Executive Council or staff of the Alabama Medical Directors Association. Comments and letters to the editor are welcome.



2021 Individual Membership and Conference Registration

Name: _____ Professional Designation: _____

Facility Name: _____

Facility Address: _____
Street or PO Box City, State ZIP

*Home Address: _____
Street or PO Box City, State ZIP

Facility Phone: _____ *Cell Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Check here to opt out of being listed in the 2021 ALMDA **Online** Member Directory.

**Home address and cell phone number will not be published.*

Select a Membership Category (Pay dues online at www.tinyurl.com/ALMDA2021)

Note: Membership dues are non-refundable

Regular Membership: \$100

Physicians and Nurse Practitioners involved in long-term care

Associate Membership: \$50

Nurses, Pharmaceutical Representatives, Administrators, and any other professional involved in long-term care

Meeting Registration (Register online at www.tinyurl.com/ALMDA2021)

Attendees of ALMDAs conferences must be a member. Choose the appropriate category above.

Mid Winter Conference (Jan. 23, 2021) \$200 (Add \$25 if registering after Jan. 18)

Accommodation information will be posted at www.almda.org if this is an in-person meeting.

Annual Conference (July 22-25, 2021) \$300 (Add \$25 if registering after July 19)

Accommodation information will be posted at www.almda.org if this is an in-person meeting.

Cancellation Policy: Meeting registration fees will be refunded in full if cancellations are received not less than 72 hours from the event date. Cancellations received less than 72 hours before the event are not be eligible for refunds.

PAYMENT:

Credit Card: VISA MasterCard American Express Check payable to ALMDA

Cardholder Name: _____

Billing Address: _____
Street or PO Box City, State ZIP

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Signature: _____ Email for Receipt: _____ Amount: \$ _____

**Complete form and return to: Alabama Medical Directors Association (ALMDA)
P.O. Box 1900 • Montgomery, AL 36102 • Fax: (334) 269-5200**

For more information, please contact Meghan Martin at MMartin@alamedical.org or (334) 954-2500.