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PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS IN ESCAMBIA COUNTY NURSING HOMES

Measures To Support Long-Term Care Facilities



Contact:

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Pensacola, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia) is working closely with local nursing homes and other long-term care facilities to take proactive steps to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. Nursing home populations are at a higher risk of being affected by COVID-19, because residents are typically older or disabled adults often with underlying chronic medical conditions. “These proactive steps support long-term care facilities to practice disease prevention methods and reduce transmission of COVID-19 in Escambia County’s most vulnerable populations,” said FDOH-Escambia Director, John J. Lanza, MD, PhD, MPH, FAAP, FHPS.

As of 9 a.m. CT on Friday, April 17, the total number of Escambia County cases with a COVID-19 diagnosis in residents or staff of long-term care facilities is fifty-two (52). Public health efforts at this time are focused concurrently on containing the spread of this virus and mitigating the impact of this virus. Contact tracing is frequently used during such efforts. Persons identified to be at-risk through the contact tracing process are interviewed, evaluated, and educated on their risk factors and what to do.

Measures to Support Long-Term Care Facilities

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that nursing homes:

- Restrict all visitation except for certain compassionate care situations, such as end of life situations
- Restrict all volunteers and non-essential healthcare personnel (HCP), including non-essential personal care providers (e.g., barbers)
- Cancel all group activities and communal dining
- Implement active screening of residents and HCP for fever and respiratory symptoms

FDOH-Escambia monitors implementation of the CDC’s guidelines by facilitating daily communication and conducting readiness assessments with each Escambia County long-term care facility. The readiness assessments include an infection control evaluation, education of prevention measures and resources available to support prevention practices, and contact information for epidemiology and infection control specialists. These proactive steps improve long-term care facilities’ ability to:

- Prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into the facility.
- Identify infections early.
- Mitigate the spread if infection occurs.
- Assess the facility’s supply of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Initiate measures to optimize the supply of PPE.

- Manage severe illness.

FDOH-Escambia encourages residents and visitors to take steps to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19. Everyone has an important role in preventing the spread of this virus.

Take Steps to Protect Against Spreading COVID-19

FDOH-Escambia encourages the practice of [social distancing](#) by avoiding large gatherings (more than 10 people) and staying at least six (6) feet away from others. Additionally, FDOH-Escambia advises following the [CDC recommendation](#) regarding the use of cloth face coverings. Wearing a cloth face covering in public settings, like grocery stores and pharmacies, is a voluntary recommendation that can help slow the spread of COVID-19. For proper use instructions and more information, visit the [CDC website](#).

Follow these steps in all situations, even when you feel perfectly healthy:

- Avoid close contact with others, such as hugging, kissing, or shaking hands;
- Avoid large gatherings (more than 10 people) and stay at least six (6) feet away from others;
- Avoid unnecessary travel, especially international travel and cruise travel;
- Avoid being around anyone who is sick or who may have a weak immune system;
- Move away from people before coughing or sneezing;
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue then throw it away;
- Wash your hands often, especially after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose;
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys and doorknobs.

Where to find COVID-19 informational resources

The Florida Department of Health (Department) works continuously with all our community partners to ensure that everyone is prepared in the eventuality of infectious disease spread. Please visit the Department's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>. The webpage remains the best and most up-to-date resource for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

For any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling **1-866-779-6121** or emailing COVID-19@flhealth.gov. **The Call Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

The CDC also has a website with information related to COVID-19:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

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