

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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### Hospital Discharges to Nursing Homes During COVID-19 Pandemic (Released April 14, 2020)

Nursing homes are an essential component of the statewide surge plan.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, they have been challenged with COVID-19 outbreaks and limited resources in staffing and personal protective equipment while caring for a population at great risk for morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19.

This guidance for both hospitals and nursing homes, based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)<sup>2,3</sup>, allows for safe and timely transfer of hospitalized patients when they are ready for hospital discharge and have a need for skilled nursing care.

There will be 3 types of nursing home facilities to serve patients who require nursing home care after hospitalization:

1. **Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes:** These may or may not have COVID-positive residents. Those with residents that develop suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should cohort residents and staff appropriately.
2. **COVID Recovery Facilities:** existing nursing homes dedicated to accepting COVID-positive patients from hospitals, particularly those demonstrating a likelihood for continued nursing home care after recovery from acute illness
3. **Alternate COVID Recovery Facilities:** previously vacated spaces that are being reoccupied to care for COVID-positive patients from hospitals who demonstrate a likelihood for discharge back to the community afterwards

#### Patient Type Definitions:

1. **COVID status unknown:** patients who were not tested for COVID-19 because they never had signs or symptoms of COVID-19 OR patients who tested negative for COVID-19
2. **COVID-positive:** patients who have tested positive for COVID-19

#### Hospital Discharges to Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes

**COVID status unknown patients should be transferred to Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes, provided:**

- The patient has no current COVID-19 symptoms; AND
- One nasopharyngeal (NP) or oropharyngeal (OP) specimen from the patient tests negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA; AND
- The patient is quarantined in their room for 14 days upon arrival at the nursing home. If symptoms develop during the quarantine period, they should be tested for COVID-19.

**COVID status unknown nursing home residents can return to their home after an Emergency Department visit or same-day procedure without COVID-19 testing if the resident is not admitted to an inpatient floor and hospital stay is ≤ 48 hours.** They should be quarantined for 14 days at the nursing home upon return.

**COVID-positive patients should be transferred to Existing/Traditional Nursing Homes, provided:**

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for ≥ 72 hours; AND
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath); AND
- Two consecutive NP or OP specimens (collected ≥ 24 hours apart) test negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA
- The patient is quarantined in their room for 14 days upon arrival at the nursing home. If symptoms develop during the quarantine period, they should be tested for COVID-19.



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### **Hospital Discharges of COVID-Positive Patients to COVID Recovery Facilities**

Patients testing positive for COVID-19 can be transferred to a COVID Recovery Facility if an Existing/Traditional Nursing does not accept the patient due to inability to care for the patient.

#### **COVID-positive patients should be transferred to COVID Recovery Facilities if:**

- An existing/traditional nursing home does not accept the patient; AND
- The patient resided in a nursing home immediately prior to hospitalization OR the patient demonstrates need for skilled nursing after recovery from acute illness

#### **COVID-positive patients should be transferred to Alternate COVID Recovery Facilities if:**

- An existing/traditional nursing home does not accept the patient; AND
- The patient demonstrates potential for discharge to the community after recovery from acute illness

**Table: Discharge guidance for hospitalized patients requiring skilled nursing.**

| <b>Discharge to:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>COVID-Positive Patient</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>COVID Status Unknown Patient</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Existing/Traditional Nursing Home if</b><br>- Nursing Home is aware of the patient's COVID status and accepts the patient;<br><br>AND<br>- Adequate infection control measures can be taken by the Nursing Home to contain COVID-19. | 1. Fever-free without fever-reducing medications $\geq$ 72 hours;<br>AND<br>2. Improvement in respiratory symptoms;<br>AND<br>3. Two consecutive NP or OP specimens (collected $\geq$ 24 hours apart) test negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA;<br>AND<br>4. Patient is quarantined for 14 days upon arrival at the nursing home. If symptoms develop during the quarantine period, they should be tested for COVID-19. | 1. Patient has no current COVID-19 symptoms;<br>AND<br>2. One nasopharyngeal NP or OP specimen tests negative for SARS-CoV-2 RNA;<br>AND<br>3. Patient is quarantined for 14 days upon arrival at the nursing home. If symptoms develop during the quarantine period, they should be tested for COVID-19. |
| <b>COVID Recovery Facility if:</b><br>- The patient resided in a nursing home immediately prior to hospitalization;<br><br>OR<br>- The patient demonstrates potential need for skilled nursing after recovery from acute illness        | 1. Traditional Nursing Home will not accept the patient                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 1. Rule-out testing is positive (patient becomes COVID-positive)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Alternate COVID Recovery Facility if:</b><br>- The patient demonstrates potential for discharge to the community after recovery from acute illness                                                                                   | 1. Traditional Nursing Home will not accept the patient                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 1. Rule-out testing is positive (patient becomes COVID-positive)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

Questions about these guidelines for transfer to nursing homes and infection control issues can be directed to the DPH Infectious Diseases Section at 860-509-7995. Other questions about COVID-19 can be emailed to [COVID19.dph@ct.gov](mailto:COVID19.dph@ct.gov)

#### **References:**

1. CT Office of the Governor. State Medical Surge Plan for Long-Term Care Facilities, Press Release: <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2020/04-2020/Governor-Lamont-Coronavirus-Update-April-11>
2. CDC. Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings (Interim Guidance): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html>
3. CDC. Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>