

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH




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Acting Commissioner

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Lt. Governor

HEALTHCARE QUALITY AND SAFETY BRANCH

BLAST FAX 2020-63

TO: All Nursing Homes

FROM: Commissioner Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH 

CC: Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron, MPH, LNHA
Barbara Cass, RN., Branch Chief, Healthcare Quality and Safety Branch
Donna Ortelie, Section Chief, Facility Licensing and Investigations Section

DATE: June 2, 2020

SUBJECT: Infection Control Support Nurses

Infection Control Support Nurse

The Facility Licensing and Investigations Section (FLIS) of the Department of Public Health (DPH) has hired Infection Control Support Nurses (ICSN). These are Per Diem nurses to assist FLIS in conducting enhanced monitoring at COVID-19 affected nursing homes or Assisted Living Service Agencies. These Registered Nurses will evaluate health care facilities for compliance with infection prevention and control standards and guidelines and assesses safety and quality of resident care provided relative to infection control and the environment.

The enhanced monitoring plan is intended to reinforce infection prevention and control to address the pandemic in order to provide the best quality care to our most vulnerable residents in the state of Connecticut. The (ICSN) will cover all shifts, seven days per week to supplement the duties of the FLIS Nurse Consultants. The (ICSN) will support your facility staff in complying with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and conduct real time training and will not be writing deficiencies or violations. If a significant issue of noncompliance is identified, FLIS staff will be notified for further follow-up.

Additional duties include providing consultation to the health care facilities to promote infection prevention and control to include the overall effectiveness of the Infection Prevention and Control Program (IPCP). This includes review of IPCP policies and procedures; Standard and



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Transmission-Based Precautions; quality of resident care; the surveillance plan; visitor entry and facility screening practices; education, monitoring, and screening practices of staff; facility policies and procedures to address staffing issues during emergencies; facilitating visitation between residents and families; facility reporting to residents, representatives and families about new onset of respiratory symptoms of residents, staff, and communicating updates to residents, their representatives, and families; and evaluation for adequacy of personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies.

The Infection Control Support Nurse maintains a professional and objective relationship with the institutional staff, is not an employee of the institution, and the institution does not direct or supervise the (ICSN) to his/her duties. All Per Diem Nurses will have their own personal protective equipment (PPE) supplied by the DPH.

Roll Out

- The Infection Control Support Nurse will be deployed to the facilities by first week of June 2020
- The visit will be unannounced
- The ICSN will be on site for 2-3 days (however, if the facility is assessed to be following infection control guidance appropriately and control measures are working the nurse may be deployed to another facility
- The ICSN will not be replacing the National Guard. The guard's responsibility is specifically to the environment of care and PPE. The ICSN will focus on **Just In Time** training on infection Control

Responsibilities

The Infection Control Support Nurse responsibilities include:

- Reporting to the Department issues and concerns regarding quality of care and services being provided by the institution
- Monitoring the institution's facility-wide infection prevention and control plan including infection prevention and control (IPCP) including standards, policies, and procedures that are current and based on national standards
- Monitoring facility's environmental cleaning protocols
- Reports to Department positive and negative issues related to said oversight
- Assessing administration's ability to manage and the care/services being provided by staff
- Monitoring of care/services being provided
- Assessing Staffing
- Assessing PPE supplies
- Promotes staff growth and accountability
- Educates staff regarding current infection prevention and control practices
- Submits required reports and/or survey tools to the Department in accordance the Department of Public Health. (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services COVID-19 Focused Survey for Nursing Homes Tool)

Training

All staff will receive training by the Facility Licensing and Investigations Section (FLIS) of the Department of Public Health and will shadow a FLIS Nurse Consultant for one or more visits as part of the training.