COVID-19 Recommendations to Long Term Care Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities and Assisted Living Facilities

Nursing homes and other long term care facilities are at the highest risk for COVID-19, since those congregate living facilities primarily serve older adults with underlying chronic medical conditions who are at increased risk of serious illness. The Unified Health Command, made up of Billings Clinic, St. Vincent Healthcare, RiverStone Health and Yellowstone County Disaster and Emergency Services, asks that all long term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities in Yellowstone county follow these recommendations:

1. **Ill visitors and healthcare personnel** (HCP) are most likely to introduce COVID-19 into a facility. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends aggressive visitor restrictions and enforcing sick leave policies for ill HCP, even before COVID-19 is identified in a facility.


   **If not testing:** You should plan to have the resident remain in isolation for:
   • 72 hours after the resident no longer has a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved, and
   • Ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

   **Residents with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms** should remain in Transmission-Based Precautions until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.


May 11, 2020
a. Long term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities in Yellowstone County can schedule the NEW Mobile Testing Unit to come to your facility to test residents with COVID-19 symptoms. Residents must have a physician order for testing.
b. Please call 406.247.3232 to schedule the mobile unit to provide testing at your facility. The facility must complete the requisition form for each resident to be tested.
c. Testing samples will be delivered to the St. Vincent Healthcare laboratory to be sent to the Montana Public Health Laboratory with the State courier service.
d. The Montana Public Health Laboratory will call the phone number supplied on the requisition form with positive test results. (Please make sure to put a good phone number for reporting results on the requisition form.)
e. All results will be reported to the provider and public health. (Please make sure to also provide a fax number for faxing results on the requisition form.)
f. Test results take approximately 48 hours.
g. A Public Health team member will contact the facility to follow-up on all positive tests.

Staff with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should immediately be excluded from work. We recommend that the facilities decide on the best way for their staff to get evaluated should they develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Possibilities include: referral to their Primary Care Provider (PCP), evaluation at the Billings Clinic assessment clinic, or at RiverStone Health Clinic.

4. Both residents and HCPs will be prioritized for processing results.