

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Scott A. Rivkees, MD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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## **Mandatory Reporting of COVID-19: Point-of-Care Testing in Long-Term Care Facilities Within 24 Hours**

September 10, 2020

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that it will begin providing nursing homes with a point-of-care rapid response testing instrument to support each facility's ability to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The data collected through the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) system directly supports this initiative by helping to prioritize the nursing homes with testing needs and an increasing number of cases. The methodology describing how facilities are prioritized, and a listing of the facilities, has been posted on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services COVID-19 NHSN nursing home data [page](#). A list of frequently asked questions is also available [here](#).

### **Reporting**

Health care practitioners, facilities and laboratories are subject to mandatory reporting to the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) under section 381.0031, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 64D-3, Florida Administrative Code.

- All positive, negative and indeterminate COVID-19 laboratory results must be reported to the FDOH via electronic laboratory reporting (ELR) or by fax within 24 hours. This includes all COVID-19 test types: polymerase chain reaction (PCR), other RNA, antigen, and antibody tests. For a list of county health departments and their reporting contact information, please visit: [www.FLhealth.gov/chdepcontact](http://www.FLhealth.gov/chdepcontact).
- Health care providers and facilities must report by fax all COVID-19 cases and negative test results to their county health departments within 24 hours.

If your facility is conducting in-house COVID-19 testing and wants to establish reporting through a web portal or set up an ELR feed with the FDOH, please begin the enrollment process by contacting the FDOH ELR program at the following email address: [DLElectronicLabReporting@flhealth.gov](mailto:DLElectronicLabReporting@flhealth.gov). Until your ELR feed is in production, fax results to your county health department.

Suspected or confirmed outbreaks of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities, or similar group settings such as assisted living facilities, must be reported immediately and are defined as:

- One or more facility-acquired laboratory-confirmed<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 cases in a resident.
- Two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in staff with epidemiological linkage<sup>2</sup> who do not share a household and are not listed as a close contact<sup>3</sup> of each other outside of the workplace during standard case investigation or contact tracing.
- Two or more acute respiratory illness (ARI)<sup>4</sup> cases among residents or staff within 72 hours with epidemiological linkage<sup>2</sup> who do not share a household and are not listed as a close contact<sup>3</sup> of each other outside of the workplace during standard case investigation or contact tracing.

## Resources

[Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes](#)

[Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel](#)

[What you need to know now about COVID-19 in Florida](#)

<sup>1</sup>Laboratory confirmation: detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in a clinical specimen using a PCR or antigen test.

<sup>2</sup>Epidemiological linkage: cases were present in the setting during the same time period (e.g. same classroom, school event, work shift or department) within 14 days prior to the event date and that there is no other more likely source of exposure for identified cases (e.g. same household).

<sup>3</sup>Close contact: Being within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes.

<sup>4</sup>ARI case is defined an individual with two or more of the following symptoms: Coryza/runny nose, cough, difficulty breathing, fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, or wheezing.