

UPDATE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Stay informed. Take precautions. Stay safe.

Dear Members,

Mass-ALA has advocated for increased flexibilities and further steps towards reopening in ALRs, factoring in ongoing feedback from members and residents, as well as public health data.

EOEA has released their latest ALR guidances, which address the following:

- **Vaccine Opportunities for ALRs post Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program:** The purpose of this letter is to offer recommendations for obtaining COVID-19 vaccines for residents and staff after the conclusion of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program on-site program. [Click here for the letter.](#)
- **Updated Guidance for Assisted Living Residences during COVID-19:** This guidance document is effective immediately and replaces the previous guidance issued on January 20th, 2021. New content changes from previously issued guidance are reflected in **red** text. [Click here for the updated guidance.](#)
- **DPH – Surveillance Testing Update:** Please note – while compliance with the testing program is mandatory for skilled nursing facilities and rest homes, it is *recommended* for assisted living residences. (See [Mass-ALA's email dated 3-16-2021](#)). [Click here for the surveillance testing update.](#)

We are pleased that the Updated Guidance for ALRs during COVID-19 adopts an approach of directing ALRs to follow the rules for general community settings for each activity in which residents and staff will be engaging. This includes following the Massachusetts rules for restaurants in dining, gyms for exercise, cinemas for movies, and places of worship for religious services. It builds on an approach that Mass-ALA has partnered with EOEA on in providing input in the development of guidance – that residents will have optimal happiness, health, and safety if they may engage in the activities allowed in the broader community within their ALR. We are thankful that EOEA has provided guidelines that facilitate the reopening of ALRs to many of the most popular activities, with proper safety protocols in place.

Other notable aspects of the guidance include:

- In-person tours are explicitly allowed.
- Staff is no longer required to escort visitors to and from the resident's unit.
- Infection control procedures such as staff use of PPE have not changed.
- In-unit visitation should follow the CDC guidelines on household visits.
- Vaccination status is not a consideration in the guidelines, except regarding recommended surveillance testing.
- ALRs must provide the move-in-related COVID-19 procedures and expectations to new residents and family members in writing before they move in.

Mass-ALA advocated for more flexible dining and activity options, and we appreciate EOEA's considerations of that in the updated guidelines. We welcome your feedback on which next steps Mass-ALA should advocate for in reopening, by emailing us at massala@mass-ala.org.

**The information provided in this COVID 19 update is solely for general informational purposes to assist in understanding the evolving guidance regarding the current COVID 19 public health threat. It is not intended to be a primary public health or medical resource, but is provided as a clearinghouse for or compilation of various guidance issued by official and related sources.*