

UPDATE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Stay informed. Take precautions. Stay safe.

Dear Members,

EOEA has issued two letters related to the May 11 end of the Public Health Emergency, and other recent policy updates. Both communications highlight best practices for mitigating the risk of transmitting respiratory viruses. One is addressed to ALR [Executive Directors](#) and the other is addressed to [residents, families, and friends of assisted living residents](#). Given the termination of the requirement to use facemasks at all times, EOEA has included information regarding infection prevention and control, emphasizing the expectation that ALRs will assess their current infection prevention practices and update their policies to mitigate the risk of transmission of all respiratory illnesses within their communities.

Some of the features of this update from EOEA are as follows:

- ***Masks are no longer required***; however, residents and staff should be encouraged to wear them when respiratory virus levels are high and people are experiencing symptoms
- COVID-19 Surveillance Testing is no longer recommended
- Skilled Nursing Services Flexibilities are extended to March 31, 2024
- Minimum Staffing Requirement Waiver is extended to March 31, 2024
- Training Requirement Waiver is extended to March 31, 2024
- Residents and staff are encouraged to stay up to date on vaccines
- Periodic infection control audits should continue to be conducted
- Supplies such as facemasks, hand sanitizers, tissues, etc. are encouraged to be provided for those individuals who choose to use them
- Graphics to demonstrate good hygiene for those who may need reminders are recommended
- Good infection control measures when cleaning is reviewed and discussed
- Staff who need to wear N95 masks should continue to be fit tested
- Residents, staff, and visitors for illness should be screened for illness
- COVID-19 Rapid Antigen tests should be provided to staff, residents and visitors as needed
- Ventilation inside the ALR should be increased and use of outdoor space encouraged as appropriate
- People who have never had a COVID-19 vaccination are up to date if they receive one dose of the bivalent vaccine.

Please note that there are important details for each bullet point listed above and they are specified in the EOEA documents. The letter to ALR Executive Directors is available [here](#), and the letter to residents, family, and friends of assisted living residents is available [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact us at Mass-ALA@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.*

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