



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

SALLY DRESLIN, M.S., R.N.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

April 29, 2020

Dear Nursing Home Administrator:

On March 16, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidance to address employees of healthcare facilities, including nursing homes, suspected of or confirmed to be positive for the COVID-19 virus ([Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 \(Interim Guidance\)](#)). Under the CDC guidance workers could return to work at a nursing home:

- “At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**,
- At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.”

The CDC updated their guidance to address asymptomatic workers thereafter.

New York State Department of Health’s guidance mirrored the CDC’s position – however, going forward we will no longer adhere to CDC’s standard on this issue, and will instead require that nursing home employees who test positive for COVID-19 but remained asymptomatic are not eligible to return to work for 14 days from first positive test date in any situation and will no longer adhere to the shorter CDC timeframe. Symptomatic nursing home employees may not return to work until 14 days after the onset of symptoms, provided at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms are improving.

For those nursing homes facing staffing difficulties the State of New York has established an online portal that currently includes more than 95,000 healthcare workers across New York State and nation. Four hundred nursing homes have been invited to access the portal, and more than 200 have used the portal to date. Many nursing homes are also working with partner organizations, like SEIU-1199, to recruit staff from the portal. We have also provided 400 nursing homes the opportunity to access for free the full recruiting tools of Indeed, the world’s largest job search engine, which has identified 1,500 nurses who immediately available to work in New York State. If your nursing home needs additional assistance, please contact CovidStaffingPortal@exec.ny.gov or call 518-474-2012.

Sincerely,

Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner of Health