



Indiana
Department
of
Health

Long-term Care **NEWSLETTER**

LTC Newsletter 2022-05
Jan. 20, 2022

LTC Update:

- **Announcing Long Term Care Support Teams – NEW**
- **CMS Testing Requirement – Reminder**
- **CMS COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination Rule – Update**
- **BinaxNOW Expiration – Update**
- **Masks – Reminder**

Announcing Long Term Care Support Teams – NEW

The Indiana Department of Health (IDOH), in collaboration with the Indiana National Guard (INNG), is pleased to announce the availability of long-term care support teams (LTCST) to provide short-term assistance to long-term care facilities facing critical staffing challenges and outbreaks during the current COVID-19 Omicron surge. The teams will enable eligible LTCFs to receive additional general staffing support so facility clinical staff and administrators may focus on resident care. The LTCST teams are comprised of up to six non-clinical general support personnel per team. Support includes 40 work hours per week for two weeks, including any shift up to 12 hours per day in any given 24-hour period. Please refer to the [LTCST scope](#) for additional details.

Nursing facilities and residential care facilities may submit requests for support beginning Monday, Jan. 24, by submitting the [LTCST request form](#) via email to outreach@probarisystems.com. Consideration for support will be given to facilities that:

1. Are experiencing staffing shortages such that resident care could be compromised or residents may need to be discharged or transferred; AND

2. Facilities that have exhausted all potential staffing solutions. Priority will be given to facilities that are actively signed up as COVID-19 Ready through FSSA and EMResource.

Initially a limited number of teams will be available (fewer than 10). IDOH and INNG will continue to evaluate need and train additional teams as personnel are available. Since LTCST is a limited resource, not all facilities that submit a request will receive support.

Probari and IDOH will review requests and schedule a virtual meeting with the requesting facility within 24 hours of the request to determine the next steps based on facility needs, information provided on the LTCST request form, statewide demand and team availability. Before requesting LTCST support, facilities will be expected to have a plan for how INNG personnel can be used to immediately support the facility and residents.

CMS Testing Requirement – Reminder

CMS testing requirements have not changed since the Sept. 10, 2021, revisions to the [QSO-20-38-NH memo](#). Facilities are still required to follow the guidance for testing unvaccinated staff according to their county's level of community transmission. Facilities are also required to test individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 and conduct outbreak testing. IDOH is aware of the limited availability of testing supplies. Use PCR tests if rapid tests are unavailable. If the turnaround time on receiving results is greater than 48 hours, report this to bburoker@isdh.in.gov, and keep the documentation. Surveyors will not cite a facility that has documentation that demonstrates their attempts to perform and/or obtain testing in accordance with the guidelines.

CMS COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination Rule – Update

The nationwide preliminary injunction against CMS' interim final rule – Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination – has been lifted, and CMS has provided guidance and survey procedures for assessing and maintaining compliance with these regulatory requirements in the following memos

- [QSO-22-07-ALL](#)
- [QSO-22-09-ALL](#)

IDOH LTC surveyors will begin surveying for compliance with these new requirements, including new tag, F888, on Feb. 14.

BinaxNOW Expiration – Update

The Indiana Department of Health has learned the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has extended the expiration date for Abbott BinaxNOW tests currently in our inventory. Deadlines for tests have been extended multiple times, and the FDA ensures these tests are valid.

[Rapid Antigen Test Update](#)
[2022 Binax Extension Guidance](#)
[FDA Extension 2022](#)

Masks – Reminder

To protect yourself and others from COVID-19, CDC continues to recommend that you wear the most protective mask you can that **fits well and that you will wear consistently**. [Improve How Your Mask Protects You](#) – review for best wearing of the mask you choose.

For source controls, HCP are to wear surgical masks at all times when in the facility and may wear a higher-level mask as an adjunct for source control when residents will not wear a mask or when the facility is in outbreak.