



Department of Health

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DATE: March 21, 2020
TO: Nursing Homes (NHs) and Adult Care Facilities (ACFs)
FROM: NYSDOH Bureau of Healthcare Associated Infections (BHAI)

Health Advisory: Respiratory Illness in Nursing Homes and Adult Care Facilities in Areas of Sustained Community Transmission of COVID-19

Please distribute immediately to:
Administrators, Infection Preventionists, Medical Directors, and Nursing Directors

Recent testing of residents and healthcare workers (HCWs) of nursing home and adult care facilities in New York City, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland counties has revealed that symptoms of influenza-like illness are very often determined to be COVID-19 in facilities located in areas with sustained community transmission.

As a result, ANY febrile acute respiratory illness or clusters of acute respiratory illness (whether febrile or not) in NHs and ACFs in New York City, Long Island, Westchester County, or Rockland County should be **presumed** to be COVID-19 unless diagnostic testing reveals otherwise. Testing of residents and HCWs with suspect COVID-19 is no longer necessary and should not delay additional infection control actions.

All facilities in areas of the state with sustained community transmission of COVID-19 including New York City, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland with residents who have febrile acute respiratory illness or with clusters of acute respiratory illness should follow the guidance from the NYSDOH advisory issued on March 13, 2020 for [COVID-19 Cases in Nursing Homes and Adult Care Facilities](#) in the section entitled "If there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a NH or ACF".

NHs and ACFs outside of these areas should continue to pursue testing of residents and HCWs with suspect COVID-19 to inform control strategies.

Facilities should continue to seek advice from their Regional Epidemiologists as needed.

General questions or comments about this advisory can be sent to icp@health.ny.gov, covidadultcareinfo@health.ny.gov, and/or covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov.