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Services

Welcome Nursing Facility Providers!

**COVID-19 Updates and Q&A with LTCR
and DSHS**

November 18, 2020

For more information:

Web: <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-provider-information>

Email: PolicyRulesTraining@hhsc.state.tx.us

Phone: 512-438-3161

COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Robert Ochoa
Senior Policy Specialist
Policy, Rules and Training
Long-term Care Regulation

- Introduction and overview
- Updates



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Reminder

Sign-up for Gov Delivery

To sign-up for Alerts:

- Go to:
<https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXHHSC/subscriber/new>
- Enter your email address.
- Confirm your email address, select your delivery preference, and submit a password if you want one.
- Select your topics.
- When done click "Submit."



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CMS/CDC NF COVID-19 Training

CMS is offering free online training for nursing facilities related to COVID-19

[Click here](#) to view currently available pre-recorded trainings.

Facilities also have access to the [CMS Targeted COVID-19 Training for Frontline Nursing Home Staff and Management](#)

Bi-weekly Live Q&As will be held Thursdays at 4pm E.T. (3pm Central) starting August 27th.

[Register Here](#) for future Q&A webinars.



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No Webinar Next Week

HHSC is not hosting a NF Provider webinar next week due to Thanksgiving.



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**No Webinar
Next week!**

We will resume our regular schedule on Dec 2nd

COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Catherine Anglin
Program Manager: NF and LSC
Policy, Rules and Training
Long-term Care Regulation

- Reminders



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Reminder: NHSN Reporting

All NFs must submit weekly NHSN reports, regardless if there are no new cases.

Weekly reports include:

- COVID-19 data among staff & residents
- PPE Shortages
- Staffing Shortages

Failure to submit weekly NHSN reports could result in civil monetary penalties. See [42 CFR §483.80\(g\)\(3\)](#)

Send NHSN questions to nhnetwork@tmf.org or NHSN@cdc.gov



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POC Test Reporting

Per [CMS updated requirements](#), all NFs conducting antigen tests within their facility, must report antigen test result information through NHSN.

Governor Abbott's [Executive Order GA-10](#) still requires all facilities to report testing result information to DSHS and local health departments.

However, NFs reporting test result information to NHSN will no longer have to report to DSHS



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POC Test Reporting

NFs conducting antigen tests must report test data, within 24 hours of each test conducted, to the following entities

CMS-Certified NFs and other NFs reporting POC test results through NHSN:*

- NHSN
- Local Health Department

NFs not reporting POC test results through NHSN:

- DSHS
- Local Health Department

**We are waiting to confirm whether Non-CMS-certified facilities may report through NHSN, if they choose*

Holiday Outings

Residents have the right to make the informed decision to leave the facility for a holiday activity.

NFs should educate residents (or resident families if possible) about risks and infection control protocol, including:

- Avoiding large group gatherings
- Avoiding having a buffet-style meal
- Do not include persons with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in gatherings
- Wear facemasks as much as possible (or as tolerated for the resident)
- Ensure frequent and proper handwashing



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Holiday Outings

Additional recommendations for holiday gatherings per [CDC](#):

- Outdoor events are safer than indoor events
- Limit the number of attendees as much as possible
- If possible, host activities with only people from your local area or ask visitors from outside local area to quarantine 14 days beforehand
- Wash hands before and after preparing, serving, or eating food

CDC recommends that those with increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 avoid in-person gatherings.



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Holiday Outings - Quarantine

Per the [COVID-19 Response Rule](#), residents who leave the facility must be placed in the 'unknown COVID-19 status' and quarantined for 14 days upon return if they:

- Have been gone overnight
- Had exposure or close contact with a person who is COVID-19 positive, or who was exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 while awaiting test results

If a resident does not meet either of these conditions, they do not have to be quarantined upon return.



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Holiday Outings - Quarantine

NFs must be able to accommodate residents who leave the facility overnight and require to be quarantined upon return.

Refer to the [NF COVID-19 Response plan](#) for additional guidance and resources related to:

- Staffing
- PPE
- Quarantine procedures



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Leaving for Doctor's Appointment

Residents who leave the facility for medically necessary appointments and return the same day **are not** considered to have unknown COVID-19 status. This includes residents receiving dialysis.

Rather, their COVID-19 status is the same as it was when the resident left the facility for their appointment, and they can return to their assigned room.

Residents should wear face coverings, as tolerated, and practice all other recommended precautions while out of the facility.



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Protocols in High COVID-19 Areas

Federal and state requirements provide provisions that take into consideration increasing COVID-19 positivity rates.

Facilities must balance resident rights to

- visitation,
- socialization, and
- person-centered care

with appropriate infection prevention and control measures.

Examples on next slide



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Protocols in High COVID-19 Areas

Visitation

- Testing strategies for essential caregivers/salon service providers
 - Allows flexibility for areas with high COVID-19 positivity rates
 - Must be communicated to essential caregivers/salon service providers
 - May not be overly restrictive
- Indoor visitation not allowed in counties with >10% COVID-19 positivity



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Protocols in High COVID-19 Areas

Visitation

NFs should schedule visitation to accommodate proper cleaning and sanitization.

NFs cannot restrict available visitation **solely** due to COVID-19 positivity rate in the community.



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Protocols in High COVID-19 Areas

Socialization

NFs may host group activities and communal dining (with appropriate infection control measures) for:

- COVID-19 negative residents
- Residents who have fully recovered from COVID-19

Refer to the [NF COVID-19 Response plan](#) and [QSO-20-39](#) for guidance related to group activities



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Protocols in High COVID-19 Areas

Socialization

Residents have the right to leave the facility to go out into the community.

NFs should educate residents (and resident families if possible) about the increased risks in communities with increases in COVID-19.

Residents who do not want to risk leaving the facility should be encouraged to have visitation and utilize virtual communication for socializing.



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Protocols in High COVID-19 Areas

Per CMS and state requirements, facilities must allow the following to occur, so long as all proper infection prevention and control measures are followed.

- Visitation (as allowed under the [emergency visitation rule](#))
- Group Activities (for COVID-19 negative residents and residents recovered from COVID-19)
- Medical Appointments
- Outings (per guidance provided)



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Visitation in High COVID-19 Areas

All NFs must allow the following visitation:

- Essential caregiver visits
- End-of-life visits
- Closed window visits

NFs with a visitation designation must also allow the following visitation:

- Open-window visits
- Vehicle parades
- Outdoor visits
- Indoor, plexiglass visits (except in counties with >10% COVID-19 positivity)



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COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Michelle Dionne-Vahalik, DNP, RN
Associate Commissioner
Long-term Care Regulation



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COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Renee Blanch-Haley, BSN, RN
Director of Survey Operations
Long-term Care Regulation



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COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

David Gruber
Associate Commissioner for Regional and
Local Health Operations
DSHS



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State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Statewide phone: 800-252-2412

Statewide email:

ltc.ombudsman@hhsc.state.tx.us

State Ombudsman: Patty Ducayet,
737-704-9075 (or)

patty.ducayet@hhsc.state.tx.us

Weekly Facebook Live Q&A for Families of LTC
Residents: Every Wednesday, 12:15 to 12:45

<https://www.facebook.com/texasltcombudsman?ref-ts>



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COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Melody Malone, PT, CPHQ, MHA, CDP,
CADDCT

TeamSTEPPS® Master Trainer
INTERACT® Certified Champion

Healthcare Quality Improvement Specialist
TMF Health Quality Institute



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NHSN – SAMS Level 3 Access

- Required for Point of Care Testing data submission
- Requires identity proofing by each individual requesting access
- See TMF resources here: [NHSN Resources](#)
- See CDC resource here: [SAMS Level Three Access](#)
- Reach out to us at nhnetwork@tmf.org to submit requests for assistance with NHSN reporting problems.



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Project ECHO

Nursing Home COVID-19 Network Now

- Funded through the CARES Act - Participants may be eligible for financial compensation
- We have assembled an experienced team of experts to help facilitate this community of practice and support participating nursing homes in areas of safety and quality improvement (QI).
- The curriculum, which will be updated weekly, covers a wide scope of topics related to COVID-19 response and preparedness, as well as QI methods to support ongoing testing and learning by staff.
- Minimum of two staff members of your institution must participate on your team and attend the weekly meeting. Prefer that one staff member be a CNA.

More info: ProjectECHO@tmf.org ** launching next week!**



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Mini-Training

Panelist

Samantha Chase
Joint Training Specialist
Policy, Rules, & Training/Regulatory Services
Division

Jennifer Wills
Joint Training Specialist
Policy, Rules, & Training/Regulatory Services
Division



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COVID-19 Q&A

Panelist

Heidi Lizyness
Policy Specialist
Policy, Rules and Training
Long-term Care Regulation

- Questions from last week



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COVID Q&A

Question:

Are residents with Unknown COVID-19 status (“warm” unit) allowed to leave the facility on pass to see their families?

Answer:

Yes. All residents have the right to make an informed decision to leave the facility, including for a community outing or home visit.

(cont. on next slide)



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COVID Q&A

Answer (cont.):

If a resident is gone overnight, or was exposed/had close contact with a person who is COVID-19 positive, or who was exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 while awaiting test results, the resident's 14-day quarantine would start over upon return to the facility.

(continued on next slide)



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COVID Q&A

Answer (cont.):

If a resident is not gone overnight, or was not exposed/had close contact with a person who is COVID-19 positive, or who was exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 while awaiting test results, the resident's 14-day quarantine timeline will remain the same as before the resident left the facility.

(example on next slide)

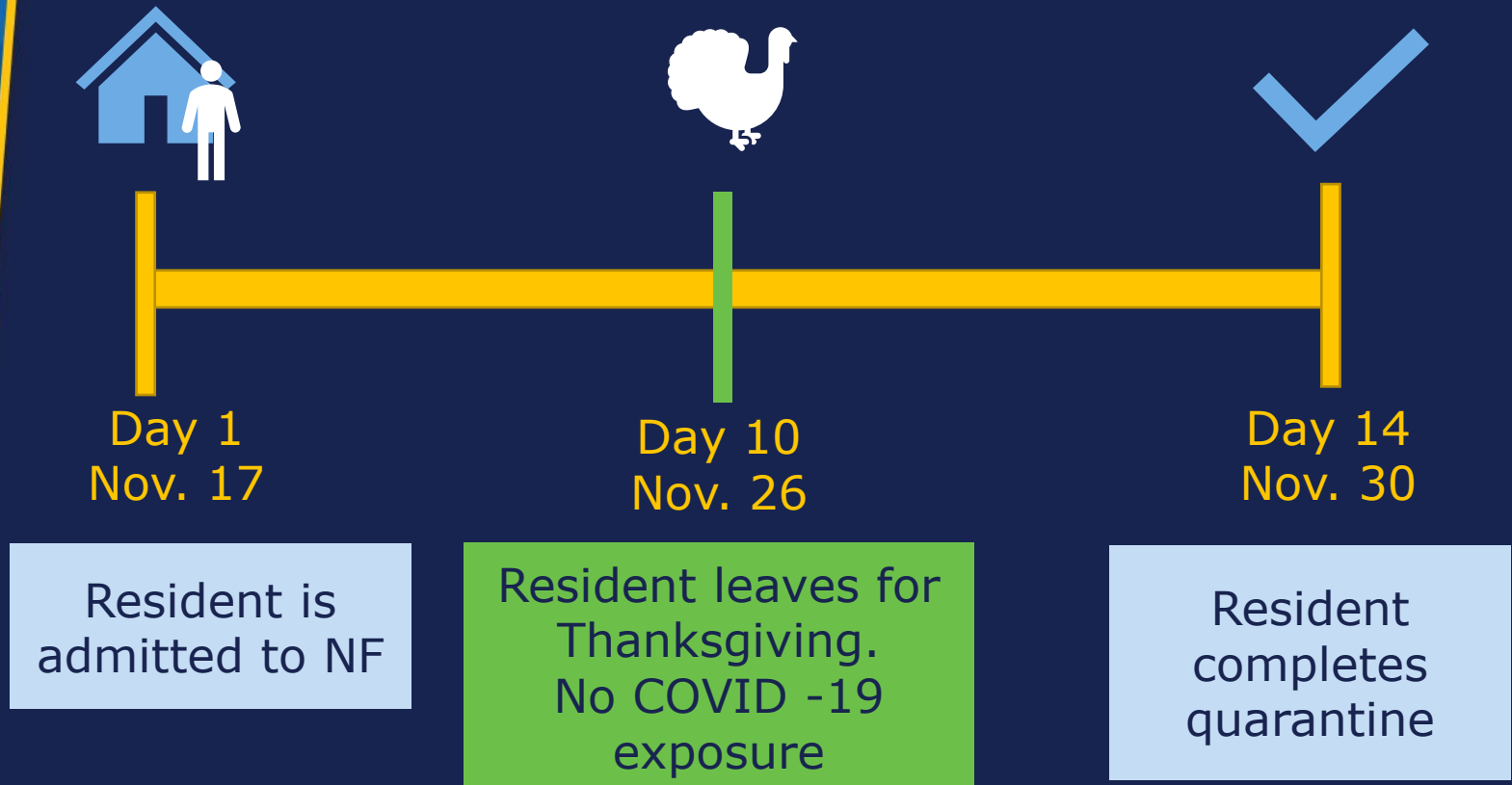


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COVID Q&A

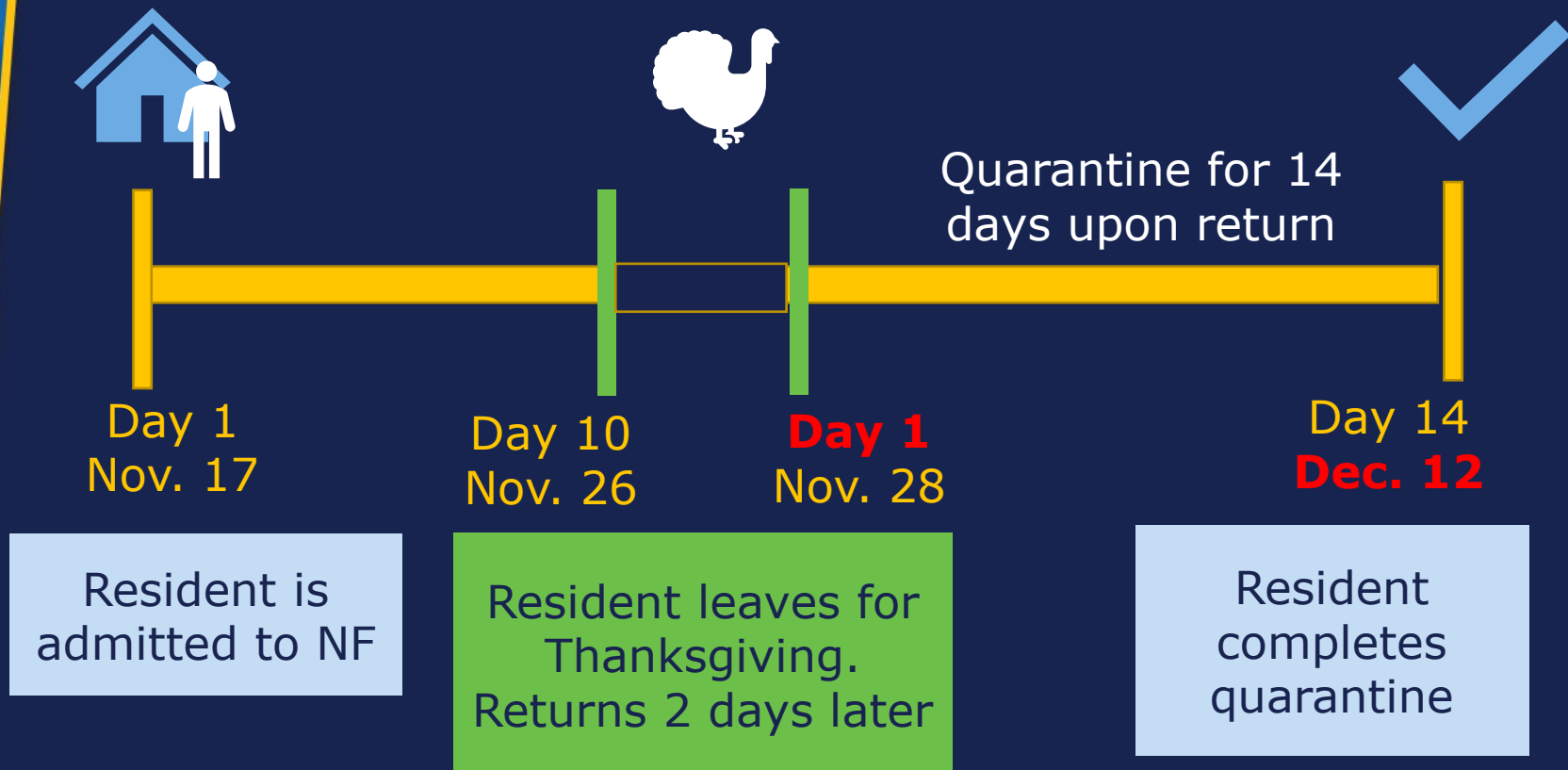
Answer (cont.): Example - no exposure; not gone overnight





COVID Q&A

Answer (cont.): Example – gone overnight





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Questions?

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Thank you!

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