

February 4, 2022



To All Staff

PLEASE READ THE **ENTIRE** NEWSLETTER FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON COVID. THIS IS THE PRIMARY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION ON THIS TOPIC.

STATISTICS

as of 2/3/2022	GSFH	GSVE	Chase
Year To Date + residents			
SNF	1	0	16
ACF	0	1	n\
IL	0	0	n\
Year To Date + Staff			
SNF	17	8	18
ACF	7	8	n\
IL	n\	5	n\
Year To Date Deaths			
SNF	0	0	0
ACF	0	0	n\
IL	0	0	n\
Active Residents Cases (in-house or hospitalized)			
SNF	0	0	10
ACF	0	0	n\
IL	0	0	n\
Staff Furloughed			
SNF	3	2	5
ACF	3	1	n\
IL	n\	0	n\

Changes in the information below are highlighted in green.

NY State COVID-19 Booster Vaccination Mandate Takes Effect February 21, 2022



Department of Health (DOH) released guidance on Jan. 21, 2022 notifying "covered entities", which includes all Good Shepherd entities, that new regulations had taken effect requiring health care personnel to receive COVID-19 booster vaccinations. The mandate requires all Good Shepherd employees to receive any booster or supplemental dose as recommended by the CDC, absent receipt of a medical exemption.

Good Shepherd is directed to ensure that personnel, to include all employees currently eligible for a booster dose, have documentation of **compliance with the booster mandate by Feb. 21st** and personnel, to include all employees not currently eligible, receive their booster within 30 days of becoming eligible.

Process:

If you have not yet received your booster, or provided documentation to your HR RN Wellness Nurse (Director of Nursing (DON) @ Chase) of having received your booster, please schedule your booster, or, provide your COVID vaccination ID card, which will include documentation of having received your booster, to your HR RN Wellness Nurse, or, the Director of Nursing (DON) if employed at Chase

Booster clinics, available to employees, are scheduled for and include;

GS Village Endwell; Every Monday 1:30-2pm

GS Fairview Home; Every Monday 10am – 11am

GS Chase; Friday, February 11^h noon – 2pm

Booster Vaccinations are also available at many local pharmacies; CVS, Walgreens, etc., by appointment.

Once you have received your booster, please provide your HR RN Wellness Nurse (DON @ Chase) with your updated COVID vaccination ID card.

Any questions please contact the HR RN Wellness Nurse, DON at Chase, Human Resources or your Supervisor.

NYS NEW COVID GUIDANCE UPDATE

VISITORS: The guidance has not changed since last week.

- **SNF Visitors Masking and Distancing:**

- All visitors must wear a well-fitting non-surgical paper mask or a mask of higher quality (i.e., surgical mask, KN95, or N95) at all times during any visitation at the facility. If the visitor wishes, a cloth mask may be placed over the paper mask. The masks must cover both the nose and the mouth.
- All visitors must physically distance from facility personnel and other patients/residents/visitors who are not directly associated with the specific resident(s) being visited by that individual.

- **SNF Visitor Testing**

- All nursing homes "must verify that visitors have received a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result one day prior to visitation for antigen tests and two days prior to visitation for NAAT (e.g., PCR) tests." This means, for example, that a test for a Sunday visit should be conducted no earlier than Saturday if it's an antigen test or Friday if it's a PCR test. We can accept lab results or the results of a home test.
- Results should be presented at screening.

- GS will provide rapid tests for those unable to obtain them elsewhere. These tests can be obtained from the receptionist screening the visitor, but must be administered outside of the facility independent of any assistance from our staff. Unfortunately, our staff will not be able to provide direction or physical assistance with the testing, so visitors who are unsure of their ability to self-administer the test should make alternate arrangements. For visitors who visit for multiple days, including a visitor who comes every day, proof of negative testing is required as often as feasible, at a minimum every third day (meaning at a minimum testing is required on day 1, day 4, day 7, and so on).
- Exemptions:
 - Ombudsman representatives. Under certain circumstances, the resident and ombudsman should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting, and the visit should take place in the resident's room.
 - Compassionate care visitors who are visiting in anticipation of end of life or in the case of significant mental, physical, or social decline or crisis. Other compassionate care visits are not exempted- only those that are so urgent in nature that the requirement to provide test results would result in an unacceptable delay in visiting. The visitor must wear any additional PPE that the facility deems appropriate.
 - Emergency Medical Services personnel.
- **Protocol for SNF visitor testing:**
 - When visitors enter the building for screening they will be asked for their negative test results. Negative tests results could be: a test card (Antigen Rapid test), electronic results (shown from their phone or tablet), or a paper laboratory result (PCR.)
 - Receptionist/designee will confirm negative results on the visitor sign in log
 - If the visitor does not present negative test results they will be given an iHealth OTC COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test.
 - The visitor should then return to their car and complete the test
 - All tests cards should be discarded in a red biohazard bag located in the lobby.
 - In the event a visitor refuses testing they will not be permitted in the facility. The receptionist should contact the HC Nurse immediately. The visitor may provide their contact information and the Nursing Home Administrator will contact them on the next business day.
 - Note: If a visitor enters the facility after normal reception hours, the House Charge Nurse will be responsible to confirm negative test results and document on the visitor sign in log.
- **Positive Results and Infection within Prior 90 Days:**
 - If a visitor tests positive, they should be excluded until they meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) criteria for discontinuing isolation for the general public (i.e., currently for five days) and present a negative test.
 - If a visitor has had COVID-19 in the past 90 days, they must still be tested. If they test positive, they must be excluded.

COVERAGE OF AT HOME COVID-19 KITS

For employees with health insurance benefits through CDPHP

Effective January 15, 2022 CDPHP is covering at-home COVID-19 test kits that are FDA-approved or issued an EUA by the FDA.

CDPHP will be reimbursing for kits purchased out of pocket (up to \$12 per test or \$24 for a kit containing two tests). The test kits will be covered under pharmacy benefits.

Members may obtain up to eight tests (or four kits containing two tests) per covered family member, per calendar month. For example, if the first test kit is purchased on January 15, a maximum of eight tests can be purchased by February 14.

To avoid an upfront cost, members will need to purchase the test kit at a pharmacy window or pharmacy counter of a pharmacy in the CDPHP network. If members choose to purchase a test kit at a non-participating pharmacy or other retailer, there will be an upfront cost and a reimbursement request form required for reimbursement.

For Chase employees with health insurance benefits through Excellus BlueCross BlueShield

Effective January 15, 2022 Excellus BlueCross BlueShield will cover at-home COVID-19 tests.

How it will work

Eligible members who purchase an at-home COVID-19 test on Jan. 15 or after will be able to submit a paper claim for reimbursement. Members should save the receipts and the box the test came in.

Who is eligible?

Members are eligible for no-cost tests if they receive their pharmacy benefits from Excellus BCBS.

Members can acquire up to eight tests at no cost per 30-day period. Please note: If multiple tests are included in one kit, each test in the kit counts once toward the total of eight tests allowed.

Which tests are eligible?

Please note the following regarding coverage for COVID at-home tests at no cost:

- Tests purchased before Jan. 15 are not eligible
- Tests must be authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and not require a lab for processing.
- No-cost coverage is for at-home tests purchased for any reason except to fulfill an employment, school or travel requirement (per the federal guidelines)

Where else can I get free tests?

- Starting Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022, all Americans will be able to order free at-home COVID-19 tests through the federal government website, [covidtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov).
- Check with your county health departments. Many health departments periodically offer free tests.
- The federal government is also providing up to 50 million free, at-home tests to community health centers and Medicare-certified health clinics for distribution at no cost to patients and community members.

OSHA COVID-19 Healthcare ETS Withdrawn

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) posted a statement dated Dec. 27, 2021 announcing that it is withdrawing the COVID-19 Healthcare Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) issued on June 21, 2021, with the exception of the recordkeeping requirements within the Healthcare ETS, which remain in place under a separate provision of the OSH Act. As a reminder, the Healthcare ETS applied to health care settings and required employers to take certain steps to ensure the safety of their staff, including providing personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfecting, screening, etc. The recordkeeping requirements still intact include maintaining a COVID-19 log of positive COVID-19 cases among employees (regardless of whether those cases are work-related) and reporting work-related COVID-19 inpatient hospitalizations within 24 hours and work-related fatalities within eight hours of learning of such events to OSHA.
- The “medical removal benefits” required by the OSHA Healthcare ETS are no longer in place. When an employee was removed from work for COVID medical reasons, the ETS required the employer to provide the benefits to which the employee was normally entitled and to also pay the employee the same regular pay the employee would have received had the employee not been absent from work, up to \$1,400 per week, until the employee met the return-to-work criteria. For employers with fewer than 500 employees, the employer was required to pay the employee up to the \$1,400 per week cap but, beginning in the third week of an employee’s removal, the amount was reduced to two-thirds of the same regular pay the employee would have received had the employee not been absent from work, up to \$200 per day (\$1,000 per week in most cases). Again, this requirement is no longer in place.