

January 21, 2022



To All Staff

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

Due to the Omicron variant's spread and new NYS guidance, we are resuming our weekly COVID updates in a new, revised format.

#### STATISTICS

as of 1/20/2022	GSFH	GSVE	Chase
<b>Year To Date + residents</b>			
SNF	1	0	6
ACF	0	1	n\a
IL	0	0	n\a
<b>Year To Date + Staff</b>			
SNF	13	5	7
ACF	3	6	n\a
IL	n\a	5	n\a
<b>Year To Date Deaths</b>			
SNF	0	0	0
ACF	0	0	n\a
IL	0	0	n\a
<b>Active Residents Cases (in-house or hospitalized)</b>			
SNF	0	0	6
ACF	0	1	n\a
IL	0	0	n\a
<b>Staff Furloughed</b>			
SNF	5	1	3
ACF	1	2	n\a
IL	n\a	2	n\a

## NEWS: NYS NEW COVID GUIDANCE UPDATE

To address some questions we are providing clarification on info provided 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.
  - *GSC will begin requiring the test results as of Monday 1/17/22. 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.

Thank you

Patti Mackey

GSC COO

Dave Fawns

GSC VP of HR