



## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions: Testing in Nursing Facilities and Assisted-Living Residences

Updated March 14, 2022

- 1. Our facility would like to continue surveillance testing for asymptomatic residents and/or personnel who aren't up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations. Will there be any swabbing assistance from the state?**

Outside of periods of high transmission, the State doesn't recommend surveillance testing. After March 21, the State will not provide swabbing services for surveillance testing. Facilities should still conduct testing to meet any federal CMS requirements.

- 2. When should staff be tested who are not up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations?**

Staff who are not up to date should be tested in accordance with CMS regulations:

- Low transmission- no testing recommended
- Moderate transmission- once per week
- Substantial transmission- twice per week
- High transmission- twice per week

- 3. Will RIDOH provide testing support for CMS requirements for testing of staff who are not up to date?**

By the end of April 2022, facilities must arrange their own swabbing and/or courier services to meet federal CMS regulations. The State will not provide any swabbing and/or courier services effective May 1.

- 4. Can these testing requirements be met with point-of-care tests?**

Yes. Point-of-care tests and laboratory-processed tests will meet CMS requirements.

- 5. If the community transmission level drops into a lower category, when do we switch our testing frequency?**

If the level of community transmission decreases to a lower level, the facility should continue testing staff at the higher frequency until community transmission has remained at the lower level for at least two weeks.

- 6. If the community transmission level increases to a higher level of activity, when do we switch our testing frequency?**

If the level of community transmission increases to a higher level, the facility should begin testing staff at the frequency shown in the table above as soon as the criteria for the higher activity level are met.

- 7. If we have an outbreak, how do we schedule testing support?**



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Once a positive case has been identified, facilities should contact their assigned RIDOH case manager. RIDOH will evaluate strategies for outbreak testing on a case-by-case basis and may recommend point-of-care testing or testing that is sent to a laboratory. By the end of April, facilities should be able to use point-of-care tests or send tests to their partner laboratory to conduct outbreak investigation.

### **8. If we want to continue staff testing, even when the state does not support this effort can we? Where do we send our specimens?**

Any facility can procure point-of-care test kits themselves through medical supply vendors. In most instances, these tests can be reimbursed through insurance. Results from any point-of-care testing should be reported to RIDOH through [portal.ri.gov/reportcovidresult](https://portal.ri.gov/reportcovidresult).

In accordance with FEMA requirements, non-profit nursing facilities and non-profit assisted living residences are eligible to receive point-of-care tests through the State's COVID-19 Community Testing Program. If your organization is eligible and would like more information, please send an email to [kerri.reilly.ctr@ohhs.ri.gov](mailto:kerri.reilly.ctr@ohhs.ri.gov).

Facilities are encouraged to establish partnerships with laboratories to meet their future testing needs. Most clinical laboratories in Rhode Island can test respiratory specimens for COVID-19. If your facility does not have an existing partnership with a laboratory, or COVID-19 testing is not a service they currently offer, RIDOH will provide additional guidance on how to engage clinical testing partners.

### **9. We are an assisted living residence. Do we have to test our personnel?**

Personnel who are not up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations should be tested in accordance with the latest requirements from CMS.

- Low transmission- no testing recommended
- Moderate transmission- once per week
- Substantial transmission- twice per week
- High transmission- twice per week

### **10. If my facility does need swabbing assistance after March 21<sup>st</sup>, how can I set that up?**

Facilities are encouraged to establish partnerships with laboratories to meet their future testing needs. Most clinical laboratories in Rhode Island can test respiratory specimens for COVID-19. If your facility does not have an existing partnership with a laboratory, or



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COVID-19 testing is not a service they currently offer, RIDOH will provide additional guidance on how to engage clinical testing partners.

### **11. I need point-of-care tests. How can I order those?**

Any facility can procure point-of-care test kits themselves through medical supply vendors. In most instances, these tests can be reimbursed through insurance. Results from any point-of-care testing should be reported to RIDOH through [portal.ri.gov/reportcovidresult](https://portal.ri.gov/reportcovidresult).

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