



Long-Term Care Regulation Provider Letter

Number: PL 20-48

Title: Transferring COVID-19 Positive Residents

Provider Types: Assisted Living Facilities

Date Issued: November 3, 2020

1.0 Subject and Purpose

An assisted living facility (ALF) must have a written process for transferring a resident with an active COVID-19 infection to another facility or higher level of care if the ALF is unable to provide appropriate care. As part of the transfer process, an ALF must have a written agreement with an alternate facility to temporarily admit residents who have COVID-19 if the alternate facility has the available capacity and can provide the level of care required. An ALF must have at least one back-up plan established in the event the designated receiving facility is not capable of accepting residents when requested.

2.0 Policy Details & Provider Responsibilities

An ALF caring for a resident with COVID-19 must have a designated space to isolate the resident from all other residents and dedicated staff to provide care for all COVID positive residents. Meeting these requirements may be challenging, especially for small ALFs. Additionally, an ALF may have the appropriate isolation space and dedicated staff to care for residents with COVID-19, but if a resident's condition changes so that he or she requires transfer to a higher level of care, the ALF must take prompt action to affect a transfer. Therefore, all ALFs must have a transfer process and agreements with other facilities should this situation arise.

2.1 The process for transferring a resident with an active COVID-19 infection

The transfer process must include the facility's policies and procedures for the following:

- Isolate a resident requiring transfer away from other residents and implement all applicable infection control precautions until the resident can be transferred.
- Have staff monitor the resident for worsening symptoms or a change in condition that would require a call to 911, including warning signs of respiratory distress. Subsection 2.2 lists the most common emergency warning signs of respiratory distress.
- Make arrangements with the receiving facility to temporarily admit the resident until the resident is cleared to return to their home facility.
- Work with the receiving facility to ensure continuity of care, including filling any prescriptions as necessary and making the receiving facility aware of any scheduled medical appointments, and coordinate the transfer of any other relevant medical information.
- Provide the receiving facility with a copy of the resident's service plan.
- Ensure that all items that the resident will need at the receiving facility are securely packed and that they are transferred along with the resident.
- Provide transportation to the receiving facility or arrange appropriate transportation according to the resident's condition and preference.
- Inform the following persons that the facility is transferring the resident and include the date of transfer and anticipated length of stay:
 - the resident, the resident's legally authorized representative, and any emergency contact(s);
 - the resident's primary care physician or medical team, as applicable; and
 - any home and community support services agency or health care professional who provides care for the resident in the facility.

2.2 Emergency warning signs of respiratory distress

Seek emergency medical care or call 911 immediately if a resident suddenly starts showing any one of these signs:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake

- Bluish lips or face

This is not an exhaustive list of symptoms of respiratory distress. Call a medical provider or 911 for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

3.0 Background/History

To protect residents in ALFs, HHSC has adopted emergency rule 26 TAC §553.2001 that requires ALF providers to include in their COVID-19 response plan a protocol that describes how the facility will transfer a COVID-19 positive resident to another facility or to a higher level of care, as applicable, capable of providing the necessary level of care, if the facility cannot provide the care required.

4.0 Resources

[Emergency rule in 26 TAC, Chapter 553, §553.2001 \(ALF\)](#)

[From CDC website: When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention](#)

5.0 Contact Information

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact the Policy, Rules and Training Section by email at PolicyRulesTraining@hhsc.state.tx.us or call (512) 438-3161.