

October 29, 2021

Dear Long Term Care Facility,

Working with Long Term Care Facilities over the past 18 months to protect vulnerable Kansans has been a priority for the state of Kansas and KDHE during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, as our federal COVID-19 testing dollars become scarcer, we must begin the transition from a COVID-19 pandemic emergency to a more steady state where COVID-19 is endemic and the responsibility for testing reverts to a typical medical cost-sharing model. Long Term Care Facilities (LTCFs) are among the groups that will be impacted by this transition.

Effective 11/30/2021, KDHE will no longer pay for diagnostic or surveillance testing at the commercial labs that support LTCFs. KDHE will continue to work with LTCFs to provide testing through the state lab in response to outbreaks that occur in the facility.

What Does This Mean?

What this means is that all state and federally regulated LTCFs **must identify another source of funding to cover the costs of testing staff and residents in their facilities; we have no indication at this time that the federal government will stop sending rapid, point of care test kits to federally regulated facilities.** It does not mean that you need to give up your existing partnership with your testing lab. Some options available to LTCFs include:

1. Working with the Battelle Midwest Coordination Center to access free surveillance testing for your facility.
2. Working with your existing testing lab to modify your contract to include insurance billing, and for LTCFs to bill insurance for samples collected at your facility.
3. Using antigen tests available to your facility through federal CMS programs or purchasing antigen tests if you are not able to get them from CMS.

LTCFs may choose one or all of the above options to provide both surveillance and diagnostic testing for residents and staff. In addition, KDHE has prepared an [Employer Testing Playbook](#) and a list of resources that may be helpful to you. You may also be aware of or have access to additional options.

What Are Next Steps?

During the transition, you may continue your current testing routine with your existing commercial lab partners. Several things will begin to happen next week.

1. The Battelle Midwest Coordination Center will begin reaching out to you with information about their free testing program if you are interested in learning more.
2. KDHE will provide additional detail to and answer questions from the Long Term Care Associations so they can work with you to begin planning for the transition.
3. KDHE will work with KDADS to host question and answer sessions for LTCFs who would like additional information.

We truly appreciate everything you have done in communities across the state to keep Kansans at highest risk for serious COVID-19 illness safe during the pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lee A. Norman M.D.".

Lee A. Norman, M.D., Secretary
Kansas Department of Health and Environment