

Dear AALNA Member,

The AALNA board of directors is deeply concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic and want to do what we can to help keep you, our communities and our families safe and healthy.

President Trump has now declared a state of emergency and additional waivers. Funding, access to information , etc. may come to fruition.

In this extremely fluid situation we encourage all of you to keep yourselves well informed about the changing issues associated with COVID-19. Go to CDC.Gov and on the home page there is a link to Coronavirus 2019 information.

This is situation requires you to be aware of all precautions, testing options and all other virus related information in YOUR state. In many states the Public Health Department has been given the responsibility for disseminating state specific information, setting priorities, assisting with obtaining supplies, test kits, etc. You can also contact your community licensing agency for updates. These processes may be very state specific so please check your state website and your Public Health website for information.

We have established a COVID-19 section on the [alnursing.org](http://alnursing.org) website and invite you to go there for all the latest information at our disposal. Go to the home page and the COVID19 section is listed, click on COVUD 19 and it will take you to the information.

**We have placed numerous resource lists on the website and also encourage you to go to: [emergency.cdc.gov/coca](http://emergency.cdc.gov/coca) and sign up for their communications calls.** you will then receive emails to alert you to COVID-19 update calls. All previous calls are available for review on the COCA site.

We have posted state specific guidance and national guidance. We have incorporated information from The

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CDC, and AHCA/NCAL, AMDA/PALTC- Post Acute Long Term Care.

Some of the sites may be skilled nursing home oriented but the infection control recommendations, visitor restrictions, post hospitalized COVID-19 patients and other issues are shared by assisted living and personal care homes. We are all caring for the most vulnerable residents and patients. We can learn from each other as this crisis continues.

We know you are facing challenges in your communities and your AALNA board members are available to answer questions, assist you in planning or provide what support we can.

We know you are taking sensible steps to prevent this infection from entering or spreading in your community.

Here are a few universal steps all of you can initiate

- 1. Stay informed of CDC, CMS, state and public and local health department recommendations and directives through the AALNA website resource list , COCA calls, etc.**
- 2. Go to [emergency.cdc.gov/coca](https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca) to sign up for direct announcements of update calls**
3. Reduce fear and panic through education of staff, residents and families
4. Place hand sanitizers at all entrances and throughout the community
5. Provide instruction on handwashing to all residents and staff
6. Have sign-in and out procedures and books in place to track who has been in and out of your community
7. Screen all visitors for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, CDC suggests having a short form for all visitors to complete and sign consisting of, at a

minimum: Are you ill at this time ? YES NO and Have you or someone you know travelled outside of the United States in the past two weeks YES NO and then have them sign. Have your legal department review the practice of obtaining this information and the form

8. All staff need to be screened just as visitors according to your public health department such as taking temps and having them answer the specific questions asked of visitors using logs for each shift. Everything is logged per shift. Many Public Health Departments have restricted visitors to essential personnel such as Hospice and Home Health, but they must be screened as well
9. Request residents, staff and visitors to abstain from hugs and even handshaking at present
10. Stay 6 feet away from anyone coughing or sneezing
11. Do not touch your face, nose or mouth until you have washed your hands after contact with someone or an unclean surface
12. Limit group activities and in some cases group dining
13. Reeducate residents and staff to cough into tissues not hands, use and dispose of tissues and unclean personal items carefully and wash their hands after coughing or sneezing
14. Cancel outside trips and or entertainment and intergenerational programs
15. COVID-19 may be viable on surfaces up to several hours. Increase cleaning and disinfection of common or soiled areas and monitor infection prevention and control procedures and assure they are carried out utilizing the CDC recommended products. Keep in mind you cannot disinfect a soiled surface until it is clean unless the product used is intended for that purpose. Check manufacturer's instruction for length of time product must be in contact with surface to achieve disinfection.
16. Disinfect all high-touch areas every hour, including handrails, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, keyboards, phones, desks, and all work areas.
17. Thoroughly clean all restrooms every 3 hours.

18. Provide additional fluids to keep residents well hydrated
19. Reeducate staff in the use of Personal Protective Equipment. Be sure they know how to SAFELY put on (DON), remove and dispose of gowns, masks and gloves to avoid self or cross contamination.
20. Monitor residents and staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
21. Report signs or symptoms to the resident's physician
22. Have residents with signs or symptoms stay in their rooms/apartments and self-isolate for up to 14 days
23. Have staff who are ill go home and stay home and self-isolate 14 days. This is often difficult as staff want to be there for their residents, but they must understand the seriousness of bringing this infection into the community where those most vulnerable to COVID-19 reside.
24. Encourage people to take the time they need to care for themselves or their families in the event they are directly affected by COVID-19.
25. Follow CDC, NCAL and CMS guidelines for the readmission of any resident who was hospitalized with COVID-19
26. Keep staff, families and residents informed

Stay well informed, take precautions, get plenty of rest when possible.

Please, take care of yourselves and each other,