



**Coronavirus Member Briefing
CMS Memoranda to State Survey Agencies
March 4, 2020**

Yesterday evening, Vice President Pence held a press briefing that included information about decisions authorized by the Coronavirus task force “to put all inspection resources, at the state level, focused on infectious disease, looking at nursing homes being a focal point of vulnerability and a vulnerable population.” See the full transcript of the briefing [here](#) that includes CMS Administrator Seema Verma’s comments about actions CMS will take.

Today, CMS [announced](#) that they had issued 3 memoranda to State Survey Agencies, State Survey Agency directors and Accrediting Organizations – that inspect thousands of Medicare-participating health care providers across the country, including nursing homes and hospitals.

The first memorandum provides detail with respect to the temporary focus of surveys on infection control and other emergent issues. Importantly, it notes that, in addition to the focused inspections, statutorily-required inspections will also continue in the 15,000 nursing homes across the country using the approximately 8,200 state survey agency surveyors.

Surveys will be conducted according to the following regime:

- All immediate jeopardy complaints (a situation in which entity noncompliance has placed the health and safety of recipients in its care at risk for serious injury, serious harm, serious impairment or death or harm) and allegations of abuse and neglect;
- Complaints alleging infection control concerns, including facilities with potential COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses;
- Statutorily required recertification surveys (Nursing Home, Home Health, Hospice, and ICF/IID facilities);
- Any re-visits necessary to resolve current enforcement actions;
- Initial certifications;
- Surveys of facilities/hospitals that have a history of infection control deficiencies at the immediate jeopardy level in the last three years;
- Surveys of facilities/hospitals/dialysis centers that have a history of infection control deficiencies at lower levels than immediate jeopardy.

The other two memoranda provide critical answers to common questions that nursing homes and hospitals may have with respect to addressing cases of COVID-19. The memoranda:

- Discuss concerns like screening staff and visitors with questions about recent travel to countries with known cases and the severity of infection that would warrant hospitalization instead of self-isolation.
- Detail the process for transferring patients between nursing homes and hospitals in cases for which COVID-19 is suspected or diagnosed.
- Describe the circumstances under which providers should take precautionary measures (like isolation and mask wearing) for patients and residents diagnosed with COVID-19, or showing signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

To view each memo, please visit the below links:

- [Suspension of Survey Activities](#)
- [Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention Concerning COVID-19: FAQs & Considerations for Patient Triage, Placement & Hospital Discharge](#)
- [Guidance for Infection Control & Prevention of COVID-19 in Nursing Homes](#)

As we learn more from national LeadingAge, CMS and Oregon DHS, we will pass on the information to you.

Additional resources and information can be found at the [LeadingAge](#) and [LeadingAge Oregon](#) websites, which will be updated frequently as new information becomes available.