

Oregon Health Authority Answers to Questions/Guidance Sought by LeadingAge Oregon

There is a need for guidance on what to do/protocols to follow when COVID has been identified in the senior housing community. They desire clear guidance on handling resident and staff COVID infections.

Questions:

1. Are senior living providers required to report to OHA and other community residents/families a positive COVID resident when the resident lives in independent living where each unit has an exterior entry into the apartment and resident does not go through a communal entry to get to their apartment? The independent living apartments are co-located on a campus that also contains a stand-alone nursing home and a stand-alone assisted living.

Yes, senior living providers should report cases of COVID-19 to the local health department of the county where the facility is located, regardless of the living arrangement of the individual. Local health departments in turn report these cases to OHA.

2. Same as #1: Independent senior living residents enter their apartment through an exterior entry where residents do not have to go through a communal entry to enter their apartment, except independent living is not co-located with other licensed senior care settings.

See response to item 1.

3. Same as #1, Independent senior living is co-located on a campus that also contains nursing and/or assisted living), but independent living residents have to enter their apartment by going through a communal entry.

See response to item 1.

4. Same as #3, Independent senior living residents have to enter their apartment by going through a communal entry but are not co-located on a campus with other licensed senior care settings.

See response to item 1.

5. Are independent senior living providers required to tell other residents if someone is self-quarantining? What are the quarantine protocols for senior/multi-family housing?

OHA recommends that the providers advise other residents, staff and visitors when a COVID-19 case is identified or suspected in a resident of the facility, without identifying the person, to protect the person's privacy. See the OHA LTCF Toolkit for additional information on measures to take in these circumstances

(<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Emerging%20Respiratory%20Infections/LTCF-COVID-19-Response-Toolkit.pdf>). Informing staff, residents and visitors about the existence of one or more cases of COVID-19 infection in senior housing will decrease the chances of transmission to others who might share common areas with the case. If the providers have questions about what to tell other residents, they should consult the local health department.

Residents who develop symptoms of COVID should immediately isolate themselves and notify the facility so that testing can be arranged at the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory. Residents who

are suspected (in other words, awaiting testing results), presumptive (have symptoms of COVID-19 and had close contact with a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19) or confirmed cases of COVID-19 should be restricted to their rooms (to the extent possible) except for medically necessary purposes. If they leave their room, they should wear a facemask, perform hand hygiene, limit movement in the facility and perform social distancing. More details can be found in OHA's [LTCF COVID-19 Response Toolkit](#).

6. Are senior independent living providers required to tell other residents if someone is suspected COVID and waiting test results?

See response to item 5.

7. Can independent senior living providers require masks if they don't provide them? For staff, contractors, delivery (Meals on Wheels, etc.) residents? What is guidance on mask usage within multi-family housing

Providers should review the agreements they have with residents to understand what sort of requirements they can impose on residents. Providers should also consult with legal counsel regarding what other restrictions can be imposed on others who enter a housing complex. It is recommended that visitors wear masks if they are likely to come into contact with residents, and that visitors should remain at least six feet away from residents.

OHA does not have any guidance on mask usage within multi-family housing units but recommends residents [follow CDC's guidelines](#) for the general public.

8. Would OHA contact us if one of our residents tests positive since we would have no other way of knowing if the resident or family doesn't let us know?

COVID-19 cases do get reported to local public health officials and the state, but those public health authorities may not know that the person lives in a senior housing complex, so public health officials may not know to notify senior housing providers. If a provider suspects that a resident has been diagnosed with COVID-19 infection you should contact the local health department for guidance. In general, establishing and maintaining a relationship with the local health department is the best way to ensure that as a provider of senior housing you have timely information about COVID-19 infections within your housing complex.

9. Guidance on whether or not we should be moving new tenants into buildings during shelter in place?

It is permissible for new residents to move into the facility, although if there are any suspected, presumptive or confirmed cases of COVID-19 living in the facility, the incoming resident should be made aware of that fact.

New residents should be screened for fever and other respiratory symptoms and advised to isolate themselves until 72 hours have elapsed since the resolution of cough and fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.