

COVID-19 Updates with LeadingAge Michigan

March 30, 2020

LTSS Providers and the MDHHS Transfer Form

Today, MDLARA and MDHHS convened a call to discuss the VOLUNTARY use of an MDHHS approved transfer form to assist in communication with hospital for discharges to nursing facilities. The tool can be found among MDHHS resources (under What Protocols Should I use to Treat a Covid-19 Patient) at https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98156---,00.html.

Additional issues discussed today included

- Nursing Homes, HFAs, AFC's find themselves struggling to ensure they have enough PPE to be able to care for COVID-19 in their facilities. Hospital discharge planners are expected to work with the facility to determine if they are able to and have the supplies to take care of the resident if discharged back.
- MDHHS and MDLARA made it clear that there is an expectation that facilities take back residents who were transferred for acute care to a hospital and desire to return, regardless of whether they have been tested and whether positive for COVID-19.
- Hospitals can work with residents admitted from a nursing facility to find a nursing facility perhaps better prepared to serve a COVID-19 patient but if a facility believes it cannot adequately serve a patient and the patient still desires return to the facility, it must go through the normal involuntary discharge process. These resident rights have not been waived.
- The Departments conveyed that they understand that PPE is scarce and suggest working with regional coalitions to manage supplies. Additionally, Region 2 South in southeast Michigan has just received a large store of supplies from the federal government.
- A facility voiced concerns that surveyors were in facilities over the weekend, and there were Immediate Jeopardy citations. MDLARA was asked if that was appropriate considering the lack of PPE and current staffing and care issues during the pandemic. The Department responded with a reminder that infection control in nursing homes was a concern prior to the pandemics and therefore must be a continued focus in alignment with CMS directives during the outbreak.
- A facility asked about ability to cohort residents with COVID-19 on certain units of a facility, and the MDLARA responded that resident moves still have to be voluntary in order to achieve that.
- There is a focus from CMS that facilities provide alternative communication for residents during the pandemic. The LTC Ombudsman's office has received complaints from families about this. This question is also embodied in the Provider Support and Wellness Checks from MDLARA.
- The Department anticipates that additional guidance is coming in regard to PPE.