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Please note: A previous version of this email said that yellow counties must test 2 x per week. The correction is **yellow counties must test 1 x per week**.

HHS Announces \$2 Billion Quality Incentive Program for Nursing Homes

Today, HHS announced its \$2 billion quality incentive program for nursing homes as part of the \$5 billion tranche announced on August 7 of CARES Act funding for COVID relief. Each month, starting in September through December, \$500 million will be distributed to nursing homes according to performance on COVID-19 case rates and risk adjusted COVID-19 death rates. Performance will be determined from NHSN data submissions and audits relative to county per-capita rates. No further details have been released at this time.

The HHS press release may be found [here](#). AHCA is scheduling a webinar for next week to answer questions and is creating resources to help members with this program.

CMS Posts New County COVID-19 Test Positivity Rates Used to Determine Your Routine Testing of Staff

Last week, CMS issued an [interim final rule](#) that requires nursing homes to routinely test staff for COVID-19 effective September 2, 2020. CMS issued [QSO memo 20-38](#) describing how to comply with the new regulation and that routine staff testing is based on the county COVID-19 test positivity rate.

CMS posted today a **new** excel file dated 9-2-20 that flags each county as green, yellow and red that should be used to dictate your routine testing frequency of staff that is based on data from August 20-August 26. **Rates of county positivity are posted [here](#)**. Please use this new file in place of the prior file in setting your routine testing frequency.

If your county is:

- green counties must test staff **1 x per month**
- yellow counties must test **1 x per week**
- red counties must test **2 x per week**

CMS has indicated they will post an **updated file on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month**.

Members should refer to the following resources for more information:

- [AHCA Summary of CMS' Testing Requirements](#)
- [AHCA Guidance on How to Get Started with Testing](#)

READ MORE COVID-19 UPDATES

Please email COVID19@ahca.org for additional questions, or visit ahcancal.org/coronavirus for more information.

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