

# Nursing Facility Providers

## COVID-19 Resources



Superior HealthPlan remains committed to supporting our members during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have witnessed the important and often challenging work nursing facility leadership and staff have done to continue to provide services and supports to residents, while maintaining the health of all. As a partner, Superior has gathered resources to support ongoing resident and staff engagement and safety plans.



### Develop and Implement an Infection Prevention and Control Plan

Superior acknowledges that nursing facilities have developed and implemented organizational infection prevention and control plans during the COVID-19 pandemic, and appreciates your continued updates and refinements, based on [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) recommendations for Nursing Homes](#). It is important to provide written and verbal updates to staff, residents and identified caregivers to help support continued understanding of the different policies and procedures in place to support continued health and safety of the nursing facility community.



### Support Vaccination Access for All Staff and Residents

Long-term care facility staff and residents make up the priority population of individuals to receive the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The following resources may be useful communication materials to **support staff, resident and caregiver understanding about COVID-19 vaccines**, options and importance.

- CDC developed a [COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Toolkit for Community-Based Organizations: Getting Started](#). The toolkit includes materials that could support nursing facility internal communications including:
  - [A basic slide deck about vaccines for informational meetings](#).
  - [Key messages for community education](#).
  - [Print resources](#), such as vaccination FAQs.
  - Facts about COVID-19 vaccines in [English](#), as well as other languages including [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Korean](#), [Russian](#), [Tagalog](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Simplified Chinese](#) and [Traditional Chinese](#).
  - Suggested [Newsletter content](#).

The following resources may be useful to **help organizational leadership prepare staff and residents for vaccinations**.

- [Preparing Staff for COVID-19 Vaccination](#) provides leadership with resources to help staff understand that vaccination will save resident lives. It encourages leadership to have open communication among all staff and to explain vaccine options providing sample letters, fact sheets and other resources including [posters](#), [fact sheets](#), [slides](#) and [stickers](#) for staff. Leadership is encouraged to remind and encourage staff members who have yet to be vaccinated to get a COVID-19 vaccine via emails, letters, telephone calls or in-person requests, and make sure staff members know where they can go to ask questions about the vaccine, either in person, by phone or via email.
- [Preparing Residents for COVID-19 Vaccination](#) provides leadership (and staff) tips on how to talk about the vaccination with residents and offer resources to support your role in assuring appropriate consent for the vaccination. It encourages leadership to have open communication among all staff and to explain vaccine option, providing sample letters, fact sheets and other resources including [posters](#), [stickers](#) and [slides](#). Additional resources include materials to help the resident [understand the appointment](#) and the [benefits of vaccination](#).

Leadership is encouraged to discuss the vaccination clinics with residents and their families. To encourage vaccination, providing staff and residents buttons or stickers to wear to show other residents they support vaccination is a best practice used across nursing facilities. Finally, leadership should remind and encourage unvaccinated residents to get a COVID-19 vaccine via email, flyers, letters or telephone calls to them and/or their families, and in-person requests.

The following resources may be useful in **developing vaccine safety and monitoring reporting in your facility**.

- CDC developed a [COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in Long-Term Care Facilities](#) guide for vaccine monitoring and reporting available, as well as with more information on [COVID-19 Vaccine Data Systems](#).



## Continue to Maintain Close Contact with Staff on Their Role in Keeping the Community Safe

Educating and training staff, including facility-based and consultant personnel (including wound care, podiatry and barber) and volunteers who provide care or services in the facility on the Infection Prevention and Control Plan and all updated policies and procedures has been a constant need for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following tools may be supportive:

- Share the Infection Prevention and Control Plan with staff, including expectations for health and safety for staff and residents.
- Access training modules for front-line staff that can be used to reinforce recommended practices for preventing transmission of COVID-19 and other pathogens:
  - [CDC: Infection Control Recommendations](#)
  - [CDC: Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes](#)
  - [CV19 Checkup](#), a survey to show risks of getting or spreading COVID-19 and steps to take to reduce risks
- Reinforce sick leave policies and set expectation not to come to work when sick.
- Ensure staff have access to and [properly use Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#). This includes transparent face shields for interpreters and activities' teams to better facilitate communication between staff and residents.



## Invest and Implement New or Enhanced Technology

Technology should be leveraged to increase safety measures to minimize unnecessary exposure between staff and residents. Considerations include implementing:

- Thermal scanners at entryways.
- Virtual companions.
- Telehealth monitoring.
- Bluetooth-enabled thermometers.
- Vital-sign integration into the Electronic Health Records (EHR) system.
- Robotics and virtual assistants.
- Visitor kiosks.
- Radar monitoring or artificial intelligence video (for falls and gait variances).
- EHR tools for assessments (point-of-care, vital-sign trends, continuity of care document transmission, meal and nutrition applications, increased Application Programming Interface [API] integration and optimizing infection control/incident management modules).
- Contactless contracts and online document management.



## Educate the Community and Communicate Often with Transparency

Residing in a nursing home during the COVID-19 pandemic has proven overwhelming and anxiety-inducing for a majority of residents during the first year. To alleviate anxiety, providers should, if they have not already, consider developing a communication protocol that incorporates information-sharing meetings, regular newsletters, ad hoc emails and open discussions with residents and identified caregivers. Educate the community on COVID-19 and your strategies for maintaining health and safety for staff and residents.

Educational topics include, but are not limited to:

- [Signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- The facility's approach to maintaining health and safety.
  - Quarantine measures, visitor policies, staff requirements, importance of hand washing and mask wearing, Ombudsman numbers, resident rights, etc.
- Updates on the Infection Control Plan.
- Status of the number of staff or residents with COVID-like symptoms, and vaccinated.
- How residents and their caregivers/support systems will receive communication from the facility on any updates due to COVID-19 status.

Providers should be open to questions from the community of residents, caregivers and advocates during information-sharing meetings or through listserv. When responding to questions, providers should answer to the best of their ability, acknowledging they may not have all the answers or that they are still developing plans as the pandemic evolves. It is important to remember, providers are not expected to know all the answers, but are appreciated when they can guide the community in a safe trajectory.



## Engage Residents in Innovative and Meaningful Ways

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the risk for social isolation among residents in long-term care facilities. While nursing facilities continue to identify innovative approaches for engaging small groups, residents one-on-one, and larger groups virtually and in socially distanced in-person settings, engagement of any sort is more important than ever to support resident quality of life. The list below offers a few potential programs to implement to support resident engagement.

- Peer mentoring to foster connections in long-term care. A [recent study featured in Aging & Mental Health](#) highlights the use of peer mentoring programs, which encourages supportive relationships between people with shared experiences to strengthen long-term care residents' sense of community and improve quality of life. The article discusses ideas for adapting those programs to respect pandemic-related physical distancing requirements.
- In-house TV channels can be used to lead exercises, community-wide hymn singing, a talk show or other community-oriented forms of entertainment.
- Decorate outside of the building by creating inspirational yard signs, or use sidewalk chalk or lawn art to cheer up residents outside the building. Side walk chalk or paint can be used to develop a one-dimensional obstacle course for residents (or their visitors) to use.
- Utilize social media to keep residents in touch with their families (for example, [Nursing Homes Get Creative](#)).
- Provide activities in the hallway. Bingo, movement activities and other activities can be done at a distance within doorways. In one community, residents are writing a group story. The writing starts with one resident who sends the story down the hallway; everyone gets to add to it by adding a paragraph each day.

Superior is committed to providing whole-person care for all members, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals with unique long-term needs across the care continuum have experienced more difficulty accessing services, anxiety about attending appointments and unfamiliarity with engaging in telehealth. Reviewing what is important to and for Superior members in nursing facilities during the pandemic can help improve coordination and provide services that support individual goals.



## We Are Here to Support Our Nursing Facility Providers

Superior is actively engaged in creative pilots such as virtual and telephonic visits with facility members in select markets to build on established partnerships to assist with the health and wellbeing of members. If you have any specific requests for support from Superior or need more information, please contact your local [Account Manager](#).