

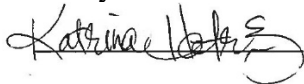
## LETTER OF DIRECTION FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Issued: December 5, 2022

Acknowledged and Directed by the Secretary of the Department of Health:  
Deputy Secretary Billy Jimenez



Acknowledged and Directed by the Secretary of Aging and Long-Term Services:  
Secretary Katrina Hotrum-Lopez



New Mexico hospitals and emergency rooms are operating above their licensed capacity due to a surge in respiratory viruses such as influenza and are now experiencing an unsustainable strain on healthcare providers. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States is experiencing an early, elevated onset of respiratory disease incidence, as the result of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), influenza, COVID-19, and other respiratory viruses.

Given their congregate nature and resident population served, long-term care facility populations are at high risk of infections by respiratory pathogens like influenza (flu). As demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, a strong infection prevention and control (IPC) program is critical to protect both residents and healthcare personnel (HCP). Long-term care facilities must sustain core Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) practices and need to remain vigilant for influenza infection among residents and HCP to prevent spread and protect residents and HCP from severe infections, hospitalizations, and death.

This letter advises all New Mexico Long-Term Care Facilities, including assisted living facilities (ALF) and skilled nursing facilities (SNF) to continue to follow the most current CDC guidance (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm>) to apply best practices in outbreak management when dealing with the placement of sick residents. The guidance states: “*Consider the following additional measures to reduce transmission among residents and healthcare personnel: Avoid new admissions or transfers to wards with symptomatic residents.*” Uninfected residents should not be placed in **units, wards or rooms** where infected residents are cohorted. To clarify, this ***does not*** warrant a denial of new admissions or transfer to a *facility*. Upon patient transfer and admission, facilities should continue to follow the CDC’s most updated [Guidance: Outbreak Management in Long-Term Care Facilities](#).

All facilities are encouraged to engage in partnerships with hospitals and other long-term care facilities to ensure appropriate support during the current COVID-19, flu and respiratory virus influx. If you have any questions about the guidance linked above, please contact the Department of Health's Epidemiology and Response Division for assistance at 505-827-0006.