

Governor Carney Requires Stricter Measures in Long-Term Care Facilities to Fight COVID-19

Updated emergency order seeks to protect residents, workers in nursing facilities

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Wednesday issued the [eleventh modification](#) to his State of Emergency declaration, requiring stricter guidelines to prevent COVID-19 infections in nursing facilities and other long-term care facilities.

[Click here for Governor Carney's eleventh modification to the State of Emergency.](#)

Governor Carney's updated emergency order requires nursing facilities to immediately ensure they are in full compliance with the Public Health Authority guidance related to COVID-19. Nursing facilities must check Division of Public Health (DPH) guidance at least daily to ensure they are complying with the most current guidance and adjust their policies, procedures, and protocols accordingly.

“Our elderly populations, and especially Delawareans in long-term care facilities, are at very high risk for COVID-19 infection and hospitalization. These stricter measures that we're issuing today are intended to save lives,” said Governor Carney. “All Delawareans should do their part to protect their neighbors, friends, and family members –

especially those who are immunocompromised. We know the weather is getting nicer. But continue to stay at home. Don't go out in public unnecessarily. You'll only increase the risk for everyone. We'll get through this. But we need to keep working together."

Governor Carney's order requires all nursing facilities in Delaware to immediately:

- Establish a cohort of staff who are assigned to care for known or suspected COVID-19 residents.
- Designate a room, unit, or floor of the nursing facility as a separate observation area where newly-admitted and re-admitted residents are kept for 14 days on, while being observed every shift for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Designate a room, unit, or floor of the nursing facility to care for residents with known or suspected COVID-19.

Returning residents to their nursing facility remains a priority, according to Tuesday's order. Residents who have been admitted or seen at a hospital for COVID-19 shall be allowed to return to the nursing facility – as long as the facility follows approved measures from the Division of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

If nursing facility residents must temporarily go to other facilities, every effort must be made to transfer the residents back to their original facility as soon as possible. A negative COVID-19 test shall not be required prior to return to a nursing facility.

Additionally, Governor Bacon Health Center (GBHC) will serve as a non-acute alternate care site for patients who are discharged from the hospital, have some Activities of Daily Living needs, and are unable to return to their homes in the community or in a long-term care facility due to caregiver or

staffing challenges. As previously announced, GBHC is one of the tools the state will use to ensure that critical care beds are available to people who need hospitalization and intensive treatment for COVID-19 infections.

Governor Carney's State of Emergency declaration and its eleven modifications – including the [stay-at-home order](#) for Delawareans and [mandatory 14-day quarantine for out-of-state travelers](#) – remain in effect and carry the full force and effect of law.

Violations of an emergency declaration are a criminal offense.

Delawareans with questions about COVID-19, related to medical or social service needs, should call 2-1-1; or 7-1-1 for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday; and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the weekends. Questions may also be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, visit: de.gov/coronavirus.

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