



COVID-19 and Connecticut Long-Term Care Facilities

Executive Orders

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Lamont issued several executive orders (EO) affecting the state's long-term care facilities. We provide a few examples of the major EOs below. (See OLR Report [2020-R-0110](#) for a complete list.)



COVID-19 Recovery Facilities

EO 7Y established the state's first two COVID-19 Recovery Facilities (CRFs, or "step-down" facilities) at two existing nursing homes and authorized the Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner to create additional recovery centers throughout the state as she deems necessary. Currently, DPH designated two additional Alternate COVID-19 Recovery Facilities (ACRFs) statewide. These CRFs and ACRFs provide up to 334 beds statewide dedicated to treating COVID-19 patients.



Federal Coronavirus Relief Funds for COVID-19 Recovery Facilities

EO 7NN authorized the distribution of federal Coronavirus Relief Funds to nursing homes, including grants of \$600 per bed per day to CRFs and ACRFs and additional hardship relief funds to eligible nursing homes.

Long-Term Care Facility Visitor Restrictions



Eos 7 and 7A authorized the DPH commissioner to issue orders restricting visitor access to nursing homes, residential care homes, or chronic disease hospitals as she deems necessary to protect the health of residents and staff. DPH issued several orders that generally banned visitor access to these facilities with limited exceptions (e.g., first responders and certain family members). However, a September 25th DPH [order](#) rescinded these restrictions following a [directive](#) from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).



Mandatory Facility Staff Testing

Eos 7AAA and 7UU require weekly COVID-19 testing for staff of nursing homes, managed residential communities, and assisted living services agencies who have not previously tested positive for COVID-19. In response to the recent uptick in COVID-19 cases in the fall, DPH issued an October 23rd [order](#) mandating weekly testing for all staff until further notice. Facilities must also conduct weekly resident testing if they have a new positive case. Resident testing may stop if there are no new cases for 14 days, however, weekly staff testing must continue.

COVID-19 Cases in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

DPH requires nursing homes and assisted living facilities to report weekly on the number of COVID-19 related cases and deaths among both residents and staff. According to DPH's December 10th [report](#) there were:

- 2,401 nursing home residents who tested positive for COVID-19 and 382 related deaths between July 22nd and December 8th
- 2,276 nursing home staff who tested positive for the virus and 3 related deaths between June 17th and December 8th
- 1,416 assisted living residents who tested positive for the virus through December 8th and 29 related deaths among residents since July 15th
- 676 assisted living staff who tested positive for the virus and one related death from July 1st through December 8th

Statewide Evaluation



In June 2020, the state contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to evaluate the response to COVID-19 in Connecticut's nursing homes and assisted living facilities

in order to help prepare the state and the long-term care industry for a potential second wave of the virus. Mathematica issued an [interim report](#) in August 2020 and a [final report](#) in September 2020.

Key Findings

Mathematica's key findings include:

- As of July 30th, long-term care facility residents accounted for 74% of all COVID-19 deaths;
- facilities with (1) greater exposure to COVID-19 in the surrounding community and (2) more residents who left the facility for medical care had more cases and deaths;
- nursing homes with higher staffing ratios were better able to limit the spread of the virus; and
- total COVID-19 nursing home cases and deaths did not vary significantly across surrounding states.

Key Recommendations

Mathematica made 45 recommendations, including:

- expanding qualifications for infection preventionists and requiring them in all nursing homes.
- ensuring all facility staff have access to guaranteed paid sick leave under the state's existing regulations.
- maintaining a stockpile of personal protective equipment available to facilities.
- continuing planning efforts to scale up COVID-19 recovery facility capacity.
- exploring a mechanism to redeploy furloughed licensed health care personnel from other settings to long-term care facilities during future outbreaks, and
- assessing how to support facilities with the cost of widespread resident and staff testing.

Bipartisan Working Group

In response to the Mathematica report, the governor and legislative leaders recently established a bi-partisan **Nursing Home and Assisted Living Oversight Working Group** to propose legislative recommendations for the 2021 session.

Learn
More

"COVID-19 Executive Orders Affecting Health and Human Services," OLR Report [2020-R-0110](#)

"Connecticut COVID-19 Recovery Facilities," OLR Report [2020-R-0157](#)

"COVID-19 Executive Orders Affecting Older Adults," OLR Report [2020-R-0184](#)

"Nursing Home Visitor Restrictions During the COVID-19 Pandemic," OLR Report [2020-R-0140](#)

