

NC Department of Health and Human Services

COVID-19 Testing: Reporting under Secretarial Order No. 4

Office Hours, 10:00-11:00

September 24, 2020

Revised Office Hours Overview

- Goal is to establish resource for nursing homes to access nursing home-specific updates on DHHS COVID Activities.
- Initial priority: Secretarial Order No. 4, Testing and Reporting.
- Anticipated Topics:
 - Visitation
 - Other topics as needed.

Updates and Reminders

- Thank you for Reporting Period 2 Submissions
- Secretarial Order No. 4 [now published](#) and also attached.
- Link to COVID-19 Testing: Nursing Home Reporting Portal https://ncgov.servicenowservices.com/csm_nh
- Materials available on NC Medicaid COVID Provider [Status Reporting Page](#) will be updated to align with Today's guidance.
- *SPECIAL BULLETIN COVID-19 #129: Reporting Requirements and Financial Support to Nursing Homes under Secretarial Order No.2* posted [here](#).

Secretarial Order No. 4

- Continues the testing and reporting requirements established in Secretarial Order No. 2, in modified form.
- Established under the authority of [Executive Order 165](#).
- Signed on 9/21/2020.
- Works to align with federal testing requirements published by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in [QSO-20-38-NH](#) (the federal requirements).
- COVID-19 Testing: Nursing Home Reporting Portal still in effect.
- Modified reporting under Secretarial Order No. 4 will begin with Reporting Period 4.

The “Federal Requirements” Qualifier

What Secretarial Order No. 4 Requires:

Section III. Effect of this Secretarial Order on Federal Requirements

This Order in no way replaces or otherwise abridges a nursing home’s responsibilities under the federal requirements cited within this Order.

What this Means

- Please familiarize yourself with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) communication: [QSO-20-38-NH](#)
- Questions specific to federal requirements will be fielded by DHSR.
- Portal submissions do not replace other reporting responsibilities.
- If nursing homes that are not covered under federal requirements directly would like additional guidance, please note in the Chat box so we can consider organizing an ad hoc discussion.

Facilities Covered

What Secretarial Order No. 4 Requires:

Recognizing the correlation between community transmissions and facility outbreaks and in an effort to align with recently released federal requirements, I have determined that nursing homes, including nursing home beds in hospital facilities, must now test in accordance with the requirements published by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in [QSO-20-38-NH](#) (the federal requirements) and as established in this Order.

What Changes:

Hospitals with Nursing Home Beds will need to report testing detail into the [COVID-19 Testing: Nursing Home Reporting Portal](#) beginning with Reporting Period 4.

Guidance for Enrolling is Available Here in [“Starter Kit.”](#)

Nursing Home
Facility
Enrollment

[Register a Nursing Home](#)

Outbreak Testing

What Secretarial Order No. 4 Requires:

For Nursing Homes in Which There Is One or More Positive Case(s)

Consistent with CDC recommendations and aligned with federal requirements, nursing homes with one or more positive case(s) will test residents *and* staff at least weekly. Facilities will continue to test residents and staff at least weekly until “testing identifies no new cases of COVID-19 infection among staff or residents for a period of at least 14 days since the most recent positive result” after which, the facility will resume Routine Staff Testing as described in this Order.

What Changes (in Reporting)

- Federal requirement requires testing every “3-7 days” so if facility tests more frequently than weekly, facility encouraged to reflect in Portal submission.
- Note: DHHS will be issuing additional clarification about “Outbreak” definition.

Routine/Surveillance Testing

What Secretarial Order No. 4 Requires:

For Nursing Homes Conducting Routine Staff Testing

Federal requirements establish Routine Testing Intervals based on the facility's county positivity rate. This Order adopts this federal standard to determine required testing frequency under this Order. Nursing homes shall test all staff who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients with a frequency based on their county's Community COVID-19 Activity Level extracted from Table 2 in QSO-20-38-NH, copied below. As noted in QSO-20-38-NH, a county's Community COVID-19 Activity level is determined by its county positivity rate. This data are available on the federal webpage, [CMS COVID-19 Nursing Home Data, under the COVID-19 Testing section](#).

Table 2: Routine Testing Intervals Vary by Community COVID-19 Activity Level

Community COVID-19 Activity	County Positivity Rate in the past week	Minimum Testing Frequency
Low	<5%	Once a month
Medium	5% - 10%	Once a week*
High	>10%	Twice a week*

*This frequency presumes availability of Point of Care testing on-site at the nursing home or where off-site testing turnaround time is <48 hours.

A facility will evaluate and apply its county's positivity rate on a schedule and with a frequency specified in QSO-20-38-NH.

Routine/Surveillance Testing

What Changes

- Secretarial Order No. 4 modifies Secretarial Order No. 2's bi-weekly survey/routine testing schedule to align with the Routine Testing Interval table established in [QSO-20-38-NH](#).
- Portal has been modified to accommodate this change.

Outbreak Facilities in High Activity Counties

What Secretarial Order No. 4 Requires:

Clarification on Applicable Testing Interval

If a facility has one or more positive case(s) and is in a county with a High Community COVID-19 Activity level, the nursing home will adhere to the more rigorous testing schedule (twice a week).

What Changes (in Reporting)

- Portal will now accommodate Community Activity Level.
- If a facility is in Outbreak status and in county with a High Community Activity Level, facility will enter “2 rounds” of data for that testing week, one for each testing round.

Tour of Updates in Portal

Reminder: Once Submitted, Where Do I Go?

The screenshot shows a web application interface for ticket management. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home' and 'Ticket Form' links, and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Financial... - Abernethy Laurels'. It features a 'Type your...' input field with a 'Send' button. Below this is a flowchart with a green 'Start' circle and a box containing the text 'Julian Alicea', 'just now', and 'CS0001434 Created'. To the right, there is a 'Close' button circled in red. Below that is a 'Ticket Fields details' section with a table:

Number	Priority
CS0001434	3 - Moderate
State	Updated
New	just now

At the bottom right, there is an 'Attachments' section with a 'Drop files here' placeholder.

Annotations:

- A green arrow points to the 'Send' button with the text: "Finished? Another week to log? Go Home."
- A red circle is drawn around the 'Close' button.

Reporting Frequency

Facilities will still report updates through Portal following the Reporting Period schedule, which requires reporting every other week.

- To be counted in analysis, facilities in Low Activity counties need to provide status update (not necessarily conduct testing) each reporting period.
- Reporting Periods have been extended through November.
- To streamline the reporting process, nursing homes are strongly encouraged to align their monitoring schedule of the applicable county positivity rate with the reporting period.

Date	Related Activities
Thursday, 9/24/2020	Office Hours 2.0* (10:00-11:00) *note time change from earlier sessions
Monday, 9/28/2020	Reporting Period 4 (under SO No. 4) Begins Testing weeks: 9/28/2020-10/4/2020 and 10/5/2020-10/11/2020
Thursday, 10/1/2020	Office Hours (10:00-11:00)
Monday, 10/5/2020	Due Date: Reporting Period 3 Testing Activity Testing weeks 9/14-9/20 & 9/21-9/27 (Compliance analysis will align with Secretarial Order No. 2)
Thursday, 10/8/2020	Office Hours (10:00-11:00)
Monday, 10/12/2020	Reporting Period 5 (under SO No. 4) Begins Testing Weeks: 10/12/2020-10/18/2020 and 10/19/2020-10/25/2020
Monday, 10/19/2020	Due Date: Reporting Period 4 Testing Activity
Monday, 10/26/2020	Reporting Period 6 (under SO No.4) Begins Testing Weeks: 10/26/2020-11/1/2020 and 11/2/2020-11/8/2020
Monday, 11/2/2020	Due Date: Reporting Period 5 Testing Activity
Monday, 11/9/2020	Reporting Period 7 (under SO No. 4) Begins Testing Weeks: 11/9/2020-11/15/2020 and 11/16/2020-11/22/2020
Monday, 11/16/2020	Due Date: Reporting Period 6 Testing Activity
Additional reporting periods may be established depending on status of Secretarial Order No.4	
Monday, 11/30/2020	Due Date: Reporting Period 7 Testing Activity

Financial Reporting Update

- **Secretarial Order No. 4 continues CARES Act Funding**

Section IV. Funding

Under Secretarial Order No. 2, DHHS allocated \$25M of CARES Act (P.L 116-136) funding to support nursing homes with required staff testing. While subject to funding availability, this resource remains available to fund testing requirements covered under the prior Secretarial Order No. 2, including all staff in combination facilities as defined by DHHS that have assisted living/adult care home licensed beds within the same building as nursing home licensed beds. Nursing home providers are strongly encouraged to seek any additional support needed through the federal Provider Relief Fund or other payment mechanism.

- **Point of Care Testing Functionality**
 - **Will provide overview next Office Hours.**
 - **Please hold POC testing invoices if not otherwise submitted.**

Next Session

- A note about invitation/registration link.
- Priority discussions:
 - Financial Reporting and Payment updates.
 - Update on visitation policy.

Questions and Answers

Appendix

Accessing Your Facility's Community COVID-19 Activity Level

Routine Testing of Staff

Routine testing should be based on the extent of the virus in the community, therefore facilities should use their county positivity rate in the prior week as the trigger for staff testing frequency. Reports of COVID-19 county-level positivity rates will be available on the following website by August 28, 2020 (see section titled, "COVID-19 Testing"): <https://data.cms.gov/stories/s/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Data/bkwz-xpvg>

The Community COVID-19 Activity Level Testing Requirement was first communicated on pages 4 and 5 (and in Table 2) in CMS's [QSO-20-38-NH memo, dated 8/26/2020](#).

4

Table 2: Routine Testing Intervals Vary by Community COVID-19 Activity Level

Community COVID-19 Activity	County Positivity Rate in the past week	Minimum Testing Frequency
Low	<5%	Once a month
Medium	5% - 10%	Once a week*
High	>10%	Twice a week*

*This frequency presumes availability of Point of Care testing on-site at the nursing home or where off-site testing turnaround time is <48 hours.

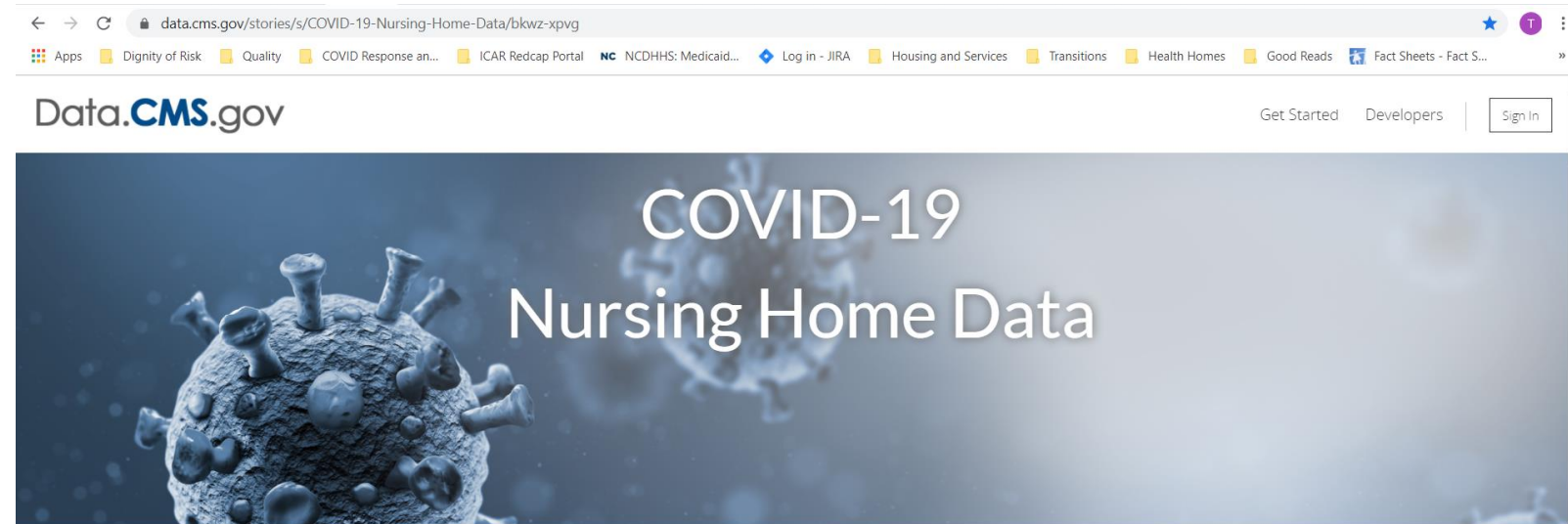
If the 48-hour turn-around time cannot be met due to community testing supply shortages, limited access or inability of laboratories to process tests within 48 hours, the facility should have documentation of its efforts to obtain quick turnaround test results with the identified laboratory or laboratories and contact with the local and state health departments.

The facility should begin testing all staff at the frequency prescribed in the Routine Testing table based on the county positivity rate reported in the past week. Facilities should monitor their county positivity rate every other week (e.g., first and third Monday of every month) and adjust the frequency of performing staff testing according to the table above.

Accessing Your Facility's Community COVID-19 Activity Level

QSO reference a link on page 4 where Community Activity Level is housed, on COVID-19 Nursing Home Data website, under COVID-19 Testing header

<https://data.cms.gov/stories/s/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Data/bkwz-xpvg>



COVID-19 Testing

As part of CMS' commitment to protecting nursing home residents, and to boost the surveillance of COVID-19, nursing homes are now required to conduct testing of residents and staff. More information about these requirements and guidelines can be found [here](#). These guidelines include testing staff on a certain frequency based on the COVID-19 positivity rate for the county the nursing home resides in. Rates of county positivity are posted [here](#). (Archive is [here](#).) Facilities should monitor these rates every other week and adjust staff testing accordingly.

Accessing Your Facility's Community COVID-19 Activity Level

COVID-19 Testing

As part of CMS' commitment to protecting nursing home residents, and to boost the surveillance of COVID-19, nursing homes are now required to conduct testing of residents and staff. More information about these requirements and guidelines can be found [here](#). These guidelines include testing staff on a certain frequency based on the COVID-19 positivity rate for the county the nursing home resides in. Rates of county positivity are posted [here](#). (Archive is [here](#).) Facilities should monitor these rates every other week and adjust staff testing accordingly.

Clicking the circled "here" will download the most current Community Activity Levels by County.

County	FIPS	State	FEMA Region	Population	NCHS Urban Rural Classification	Tests in prior 14 days	14-day test rate per 100,000 population	Percent Positivity in prior 14 days	Test Positivity Classification - 14 day
Autauga County, AL	1001	AL	4	55,869	Medium metro	1652	2957	15.9%	Red
Baldwin County, AL	1003	AL	4	223,234	Small metro	5365	2403	11.0%	Red
Barbour County, AL	1005	AL	4	24,686	Non-core	382	1547	6.3%	Yellow
Bibb County, AL	1007	AL	4	22,394	Large fringe metro	496	2215	16.5%	Red
Blount County, AL	1009	AL	4	57,826	Large fringe metro	1064	1840	21.1%	Red
Bullock County, AL	1011	AL	4	10,101	Non-core	295	2921	5.4%	Yellow
Butler County, AL	1013	AL	4	19,448	Non-core	757	3892	10.3%	Red
Calhoun County, AL	1015	AL	4	113,605	Small metro	3017	2656	18.7%	Red
Chambers County, AL	1017	AL	4	33,254	Micropolitan	356	1071	7.6%	Yellow
Cherokee County, AL	1019	AL	4	26,196	Non-core	407	1554	10.8%	Yellow
Chilton County, AL	1021	AL	4	44,428	Large fringe metro	1116	2512	23.0%	Red
Choctaw County, AL	1023	AL	4	12,589	Non-core	242	1922	4.5%	Green
Clarke County, AL	1025	AL	4	23,622	Non-core	779	3298	6.7%	Yellow
Clay County, AL	1027	AL	4	13,235	Non-core	773	5841	10.7%	Red
Cleburne County, AL	1029	AL	4	14,910	Non-core	255	1710	29.0%	Yellow
Coffee County, AL	1031	AL	4	52,342	Micropolitan	1355	2589	8.3%	Yellow
Colbert County, AL	1033	AL	4	55,241	Small metro	1349	2442	10.1%	Red
Conecuh County, AL	1035	AL	4	12,067	Non-core	298	2470	6.7%	Yellow
Coosa County, AL	1037	AL	4	10,663	Micropolitan	168	1576	16.1%	Yellow

Accessing Your Facility's Community COVID-19 Activity Level

If you Sort by "State" for NC, you will see all NC's Counties.

County	FIPS	State	FEMA Region	Population	NCHS Urban Rural Classification	Tests in prior 14 days	14-day test rate per 100,000 population	Percent Positivity in prior 14 days	Test Positivity Classification - 14 days
1899 Alamance County, NC	37001	NC	4	169,509	Small metro	6991	4124	6.5%	Yellow
1900 Alexander County, NC	37003	NC	4	37,497	Medium metro	748	1995	9.5%	Yellow
1901 Alleghany County, NC	37005	NC	4	11,137	Non-core	222	1993	3.6%	Green
1902 Anson County, NC	37007	NC	4	24,446	Non-core	1457	5960	5.6%	Yellow
1903 Ashe County, NC	37009	NC	4	27,203	Non-core	760	2794	5.1%	Yellow
1904 Avery County, NC	37011	NC	4	17,557	Non-core	719	4095	12.7%	Red
1905 Beaufort County, NC	37013	NC	4	46,994	Micropolitan	2605	5543	7.8%	Yellow
1906 Bertie County, NC	37015	NC	4	18,947	Non-core	736	3885	15.9%	Red
1907 Bladen County, NC	37017	NC	4	32,722	Non-core	851	2601	10.8%	Red
1908 Brunswick County, NC	37019	NC	4	142,820	Medium metro	2739	1918	3.3%	Green
1909 Buncombe County, NC	37021	NC	4	261,191	Medium metro	7346	2813	3.3%	Green
1910 Burke County, NC	37023	NC	4	90,485	Medium metro	3216	3554	4.5%	Green
1911 Cabarrus County, NC	37025	NC	4	216,453	Large fringe metro	7060	3262	6.8%	Yellow
1912 Caldwell County, NC	37027	NC	4	82,178	Medium metro	2299	2798	4.3%	Green
1913 Camden County, NC	37029	NC	4	10,867	Micropolitan	112	1031	8.9%	Yellow
1914 Carteret County, NC	37031	NC	4	69,473	Micropolitan	1864	2683	5.4%	Yellow
1915 Caswell County, NC	37033	NC	4	22,604	Non-core	557	2464	4.7%	Green
1916 Catawba County, NC	37035	NC	4	159,551	Medium metro	3610	2263	5.3%	Yellow