



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

Memorandum

TO: Long-Term Care Facilities

FROM: Elizabeth Daake Kelley, MPH, MBA, Director
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

SUBJECT: Update to Caring for Long-Term Care Residents during the COVID-19
Emergency

Planned Resident Leave of Absences

Because of ongoing community transmission of COVID-19 within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and concerns for the health and safety of residents, *the Department recommends that residents do not participate in planned leaves of absence at this time*. If, however, a long-term care facility resident wants to schedule a planned leave of absence from the facility, the facility clinical leadership should work with the resident and their loved ones to create a plan for a safer leave. This plan must include education for the resident and loved ones about:

- wearing cloth face coverings;
- practicing physical distancing;
- limiting interaction to the fewest number of people possible while the resident is on their planned leave.
- Loved ones also limiting their interaction to the fewest number of people possible for two weeks before the resident's planned leave/visit.
- assessment about the possible exposure risks while the resident is on their planned leave and instructions about how to mitigate them.
- The need for the resident to quarantine for fourteen days upon return from leave

If the facility does not have a room available for quarantine for a resident who is returning from a planned leave of absence, then loved ones may be required to keep and care for the resident until a room is available. The facility must communicate this to the resident and their loved ones prior to the resident leaving the facility.

Long-term care facilities should test any resident returning from a planned leave of absence, however, a negative test result does not remove the requirement to quarantine for the 14 day period.