
As Coronavirus Cases Grow, CMS Issues Guidance and Announces Heightened Scrutiny of Health Care Provider Infection Control Plans

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On March 4, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced several actions aimed at limiting the spread of the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). CMS issued a call to action to health care providers across the country to ensure they are implementing their infection control procedures, which they are required to maintain as accredited health care facilities and as participants in federal health care programs. Additionally, effective immediately, state survey agencies and accrediting organizations are focusing their attention in hospital and nursing home facility inspections exclusively on issues related to infection control and other serious health and safety threats.

CMS guidance for nursing facilities addresses:

- Screening and restricting access to visitors.
- Screening and restricting access to health care facility staff.
- Acceptance and transfer of residents/patients.

CMS guidance for hospitals also addresses screening visitors, monitoring health care facility staff and managing patients, suggesting, based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data regarding the risk for severe outcomes, that some COVID-19 patients may be monitored remotely as outpatients versus admitting them as inpatients.

Taft's Health Care and Life Sciences practice group is available to assist health care providers in developing and updating infection control policies, as well as addressing risk management questions that may arise pertaining to patients, visitors and health care personnel.

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