



Zachary S. Gray
Administrator
Alta Skilled Nursing and Rehab
555 Hammill Ln.
Reno, NV 89511
P: (775) 828-5600, ext. 2608
Email: zachary.gray@altanursingandrehab.com

May 10, 2021

Subject: Updated Coronavirus Guidance

All Residents, Staff, and Visitors:

This is a long memo, but please take the time to read it thoroughly.

Recently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) provided new guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and control for nursing homes. These guidelines affect policies and procedures at Alta. We are writing this memo to describe the policy and procedure changes. If you'd like to see the CDC and CMS guidelines, you can find them by going to these websites:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-38-nh.pdf>.

Researchers have been exploring the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine. They are finding that the COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing someone from getting COVID-19 and from getting extremely sick from COVID-19. For example, in March 2021, an unvaccinated staff member exposed residents and staff to a new strain of COVID-19 in a Kentucky nursing home. Residents who were vaccinated had a 66% less chance of getting COVID-19, 87% less chance of getting sick, and 94% less likely to be hospitalized or die. The research study can be found at this website: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7017e2.htm>.

Based on studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines, the CDC and CMS updated their guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and control within nursing homes. The new CDC and CMS guidelines have new recommendations for residents and staff who are fully vaccinated. The recommendations that will affect resident care and staff services at Alta are the following:

For Residents:

- Fully vaccinated residents can:
 - Dine and participate in activities without distancing from other residents.
 - Workout in the gym without a mask on.
 - Generally move around in the facility more freely. Residents should wear masks as much as tolerated while moving around the facility.
 - Fully vaccinated residents will be given an option of wearing a green armband to represent that they are fully vaccinated.
- Unvaccinated residents can:
 - Dine and participate in activities with distancing from other residents.
 - Workout in the gym with a mask on.
 - Move around in the facility with keeping distance from other residents and staff. Residents should wear masks as much as tolerated while moving around the facility.

For Staff:

- Fully vaccinated staff can:
 - Dine and participate in in-person meetings with other fully vaccinated staff without distancing from other staff.
 - Do not need to be routinely tested for COVID-19. However, if fully vaccinated staff have a COVID-19 exposure or develop symptoms of COVID-19, they must notify HR right away and prior to showing up for work.
 - Wear your mask, covering your mouth and nose at all times. Fully vaccinated staff could take their masks off if they are around other fully vaccinated staff and not in a resident area (for example a closed office where residents do not go). If fully vaccinated staff are in resident areas, they must keep their mask on at all times, with the exception of taking quick sips of beverages and putting the mask back on immediately after drinking.
 - Fully vaccinated staff will be given an option to wear a sticker on the face side of their Alta nametag. This sticker will represent that someone is fully vaccinated.
- Unvaccinated staff can:
 - Dine in the breakroom by keeping social distance from other staff.
 - Attend meetings virtually.
 - Wear your mask, covering your mouth and nose at all times. Unvaccinated staff can not take their mask off, even if they are around fully vaccinated staff or not in a resident area. Unvaccinated staff must keep their mask on at all times, with the exception of taking quick sips of beverages and putting the mask back on immediately after drinking.
 - Continue to be routinely tested for COVID-19. Routine testing is based on the county COVID-19 positivity rate, which has currently been around 5-7%, meaning unvaccinated staff are tested weekly. If unvaccinated staff have a COVID-19 exposure or develop symptoms of COVID-19, they must notify HR right away and prior to showing up for work.

For Visitors:

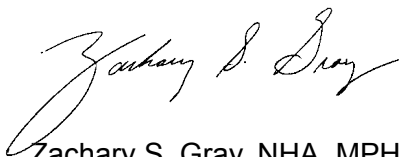
- Regardless of the visitors' or residents' vaccination status, all visitors are required to wear a mask at all times on facility property. Residents can choose if they would like to take the mask off when with visitors, but the visitor must keep their masks on at all times.
- Residents can leave for social trips with visitors. To set-up a trip, the visitor or resident must notify the visitation team (front desk) or unit manager at least 72 hours, but preferably 1 week prior to the trip. We need notification in advance because we need to receive the doctors approval prior to the trip. If a medical doctor approves the trip, on the day of the trip, the visitor must sign-in to pick up the resident for the trip. Upon return, the resident must sign-in with the visitation team (front desk). Unvaccinated residents who leave on trips will receive 1-3 COVID-19 tests following return from their trip. Fully vaccinated residents will receive COVID-19 tests if we receive notification of an exposure or if the resident develops COVID-19 symptoms.

The new CDC and CMS recommendations have been created based on research showing that the COVID-19 vaccine is effective. As we are all part of the Alta community, which is a setting that is vulnerable to rapid COVID-19 spread, we are proud of our high vaccination rates among staff and residents and are supportive of the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you are a resident or visitor and have questions about COVID-19 or the vaccines, please ask to speak with our Infection Control Nurse, Theresa Watts. If you are staff and have questions, please ask HR to set-up an appointment for you to talk with Theresa Watts. Theresa is a nurse scientist who researches infections. She is well-educated on the science of COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines and will share her knowledge and COVID-19 research with you.

If you can, please get vaccinated. Every month, we have a team coming to our facility to vaccinate anyone who is interested. You can get vaccinated at that time or by setting up an appointment through clinics that can be found at this website: <https://www.covid19washoevaccine.com/>. It is our goal to end the pandemic, reduce the COVID-19 restrictions, and operate in as close a manner as possible as we did pre-pandemic. At this time, being able to do this means we need as many people vaccinated as possible. Thank you for all of your cooperation and assistance during these difficult times.

Sincerely,



Zachary S. Gray, NHA, MPH