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Franklin County COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center
Franklin County Board of Health Approves Testing-Expansion to Protect Vulnerable Populations in Franklin County Nursing Homes and Skilled Nursing Facilities.

From:

Scott S. LaVigne, MSW, MBA
Franklin County Health Director
Public Information Officer, Franklin County COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Communication:

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on nursing home residents in Franklin County, and in order to further enhance the Franklin County Health Department's ongoing efforts to protect vulnerable populations in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and assisted living facilities (ALFs), on May 12, 2020, the Franklin County Board of Health approved a plan for the required testing of those living and working in congregate care facilities within Franklin County. This new initiative approved by the Board of Health builds on the Health Department's previous targeted efforts to assist SNFs and ALFs, and takes into account the following:

- CDC and NCDHHS recognition of the need to protect vulnerable populations at congregate care facilities such as (but not limited to) Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living facilities;
- Other US states (Tennessee & New York) establishing broad universal testing of Nursing Home Residents and Staff;
- CDC Guidance (issued on 4-27-2020) Allowing for the Priority-Testing of Asymptomatic individuals "according to state and local plans";
- Consultation with the Franklin County COVID-19 EOC;
- Plan shared with the Franklin County Board of Commissioners on 5-18-2020.

The Franklin County Health Department will be reaching out to leadership at all SNFs and ALFs in Franklin County to assist them in implementing this new effort to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks among vulnerable populations. The testing is scheduled to begin the week of 6/1/2020, and is only now made possible due to the Franklin County Health Department's increasing capacity for contact tracing. Look for more updates from the Franklin COVID-19 EOC as more information becomes available.

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Franklin County COVID-19 EOC – Public Information Officer

5-25-2020

Date

Steps We All Need to Take:

Guidance for Those with Fever & Upper Respiratory Symptoms:

If you feel illness coming on, isolate yourself and call your doctor to discuss testing options. Anyone with fever and respiratory symptoms should isolate themselves from everyone until BOTH conditions below are met:

- At least 10 days since symptom onset.
- AND**
- Over 72 hours after symptom resolution (i.e. absence of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication and improvement of respiratory symptoms).

Close Contacts:

- Those with close contact to a person with fever or respiratory illness are encouraged to stay home to the extent possible, and to monitor themselves for symptoms, and to seek out testing under new CDC and NCDHHS guidance.

Recommendations: “Wear, Wait & Wash”

What is important is that everyone do their part to keep us all safe:

- Wear a face covering when out in public;
- Keep six (6) feet apart from anyone you don't live with.
- Avoid touching your face;
- Wash your hands frequently & thoroughly using warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (sing “Happy Birthday” twice, or use your own tune)
- use hand sanitizers frequently;
- Cough/sneeze into your arm, or if you use a tissue, immediately throw it out and wash your hands.
- Isolate yourself from others if you're sick;
- Stay home from work/school or going out anywhere if you feel the slightest bit sick.
- Everyone needs to avoid vulnerable populations: those over 65; those with underlying health conditions and/or weakened immune systems; and those who are pregnant.
- Do not group together, and certainly not in groups any larger than 10, up to 25 if you're outside, and if you have to go out, please maintain at least 6 feet of space between you and others;
- If you have to go out, feel free to use a cloth covering to protect others from **you**, in case you happen to have the virus but just aren't showing symptoms yet;
- Don't count on gloves or a cloth mask alone to keep you safe, wash your hands, don't touch your face, and use hand sanitizer if you have it.
- If you are lucky enough to have Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, masks etc.) use it correctly (wearing a pair of gloves everywhere you go means you now have collected everything you've been in contact with, on those gloves.)
- Live by the motto **“If they don't live with you in your house, then they can't come-in, and if you meet them in public, wear a mask and keep them at least 6 feet away.”**