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**Nilesh Kalyanaraman, M.D.**  
**Health Officer**

April 28, 2020

Dear Nursing Home Directors:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread throughout our communities with nursing homes being particularly hard hit. Nursing home residents account for nearly 60% of COVID-19 deaths in Anne Arundel County. We need to take additional actions to protect our nursing home residents and staff. Please follow these steps to further safeguard your residents from COVID-19.

1. Administrative
  - a. Have a staffing plan that allows you to handle staffing shortages including contracting with a staffing agency.
  - b. Register with the Chesapeake Registry to supplement your ability to meet acute staffing needs. (Information should have been distributed to you via the Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Hospital Association.)
  - c. Set aside funds to pay for additional staffing and overtime.
  - d. Contact the Health Department immediately if you are having any staffing issue that can't be addressed through the above methods.
2. Clinical
  - a. A medical provider should see patients daily.
  - b. Use expanded criteria for COVID-19 symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, diarrhea, and/or new loss of taste or smell.
  - c. Use pulse oximetry with vitals to detect asymptomatic hypoxia.
3. Testing
  - a. Conduct COVID-19 testing for all asymptomatic residents and staff once your facility has your first case of COVID-19.
  - b. Develop and implement the capacity to test your residents for COVID-19.
  - c. Implement testing capacity and tracking along with Human Resources processes to monitor COVID-19 testing and results for staff.
  - d. Contact the Health Department immediately for testing assistance.
4. Staff
  - a. Continue to screen all employees for symptoms and use expanded symptom criteria.
  - b. All employees with symptoms should be on home isolation and tested for COVID-19.
  - c. Staff with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and a negative test should remain in isolation with return to work based on resolution of symptoms per CDC guidelines.

These guidelines build on and supplement previous guidance from the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, Maryland Department of Health and CDC. Your continued vigilance in caring for your residents is needed to stem the COVID-19 pandemic in our county. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Karen Siska-Creel at hdsisk00@aacounty or call 410-222-6838.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. Kalyanaraman".

Nilesh Kalyanaraman, M.D., F.A.C.P.  
Health Officer