



**GREATER NEW YORK HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ASSOCIATION**

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## **Memo 20-15**

**To: Administrator, DNS, Medical Director, Infection Preventionist and QA Committee**

**From: Mary Gracey-White RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance**

**Date: April 24, 2020**

### **Re: NYSDOH DAL – Communication During COVID-19 Pandemic**

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As facilities continue to receive many advisories and directives for CMS, NYSDOH and other entities during the Covid-19 pandemic we want to highlight the evolving recommendations for communicating with residents, families, and resident representatives. While we understand that caring for residents during this pandemic is your priority, communication that is clear and continued will decrease anxiety and fear amongst residents, families, and staff.

The most recent NYSDOH DAL (released April 20,2020) titled “Communication During COVID-19” states that Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order 202.18 provides that any skilled nursing facility, nursing home, or adult care facility licensed and regulated by the Commissioner of Health shall notify family members or next of kin for all residents if any resident tests positive for COVID-19, or if any resident suffers a COVID-19 related death, within 24 hours of such positive test result or death. Financial penalties may be assessed for violations, pursuant to Executive Order 202.19. In addition, this DAL provides suggestions for communicating with residents and families.

Recommendations to aid facilities in compliance includes facility specific case information such as Covid positive cases, Covid deaths on a facility website and/or hotline number that is updated daily. A weekly call or letter can be sent to families to communicate updates on facility actions and updates regarding infection prevention and control and operational activities regarding meeting physical and psychosocial needs of residents during the pandemic.

The DAL (attached) has additional suggestions for communication with residents and families. We are awaiting further CMS information to clarify the frequency of this communication regarding Covid positive cases and deaths from Covid 19.

On a positive note, there are decreased Covid-19 cases and deaths in NY. As this hopeful trend continues, we can begin to look to strategies for recovery and planning for the continued prevention and control of infection. We will be looking to share best practices for this and will share key information in upcoming communication updates.