



California Association of Long Term Care Medicine

Promoting quality patient care through medical leadership and education

December 31, 2021

Long-term care, including nursing homes, assisted living communities, group homes, and the homebound, houses the most vulnerable members of our society, and have shouldered a disproportionate burden from the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ Further adding insult to injury among this population, COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes have disproportionately affected those with high shares of Black and Hispanic residents.² In addition to the high number of deaths, each time that we fail to adequately protect this population, measures are enforced that increase social isolation, which has its own untoward impact.³

We also have seen that many lower paid nursing assistants are people of color, often earning less than a living wage and working in multiple facilities, sometimes two full-time positions. Some of these nursing assistants reside in multigenerational households, which has put them and their families at even higher risk during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ In fact, low wage earners in other industries also tend to reside in multigenerational households, thereby heightening the risk to older adults living in those households.⁵

Whereas, Asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 has been a well-known means of spread and outbreaks in long-term care facilities; and

Whereas, Daily in-home antigen testing has great potential to identify COVID-19 infection in asymptomatic individuals; and

Whereas, Source control with N95 respirators is more effective than cloth masks for preventing asymptomatic spread in the public and are no longer supply constrained; and

Whereas, 500 million in-home antigen tests being delivered to the general public will not be sufficient to provide daily testing of individuals impacting high-risk long-term care settings or in multigenerational households; and

Whereas, there are many households where there is no need for frequent COVID-19 testing for a variety of reasons, including lack of any potential exposures; and

Whereas, In order to minimize social isolation and risk of infection, while avoiding unwieldy workflow disruptions, daily home antigen testing could have a greatest impact on long-term care staff, their families and visitors.

Be it Resolved, that CALTCM work with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Department of Health and Human Services, and other relevant stakeholders, to recommend the immediate prioritization of the 500 million in-home antigen tests for distribution to long-term care staff and their households, long-term care residents' visitors and their families, and to low-

wage earners working in high risk industries and living in multigenerational households; and be it further

Be it Resolved, that CALTCM work with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Department of Health and Human Services, the California Department of Public Health, and other relevant stakeholders, to recommend that N95 masks also be distributed with the in-home antigen tests for all those living in each household.

¹ <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-20-00490.asp>

² <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-covid-19-cases-and-deaths-in-nursing-homes/>

³ Manca R, De Marco M, Venneri A. The Impact of COVID-19 Infection and Enforced Prolonged Social Isolation on Neuropsychiatric Symptoms in Older Adults With and Without Dementia: A Review. *Front Psychiatry*. 2020 Oct 22;11:585540. doi: 10.3389/fpsyt.2020.585540. PMID: 33192732; PMCID: PMC7649825.

⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/07/28/nursing-home-workers-now-have-most-dangerous-jobs-america-they-deserve-better/>

⁵ Raine S, Liu A, Mintz J, Wahood W, Huntley K, Haffizulla F. Racial and Ethnic Disparities in COVID-19 Outcomes: Social Determination of Health. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020; 17(21):8115. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17218115>