



Covid-19 Testing for Residents – May 26-27, 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has recommended PCR Covid-19 testing for all residents and employees of nursing homes for the presence of active infection. Residents are not required to be exhibiting symptoms and will not have to leave the nursing home for testing. The test is the less invasive nasal swab, not the nasal pharyngeal nasal swab. Employees will be tested in a separate area, away from resident care areas or outside the facility.

When? May 26-27, 2020

Why? The WI DHS has recommended PCR Covid-19 testing for all employees of nursing homes and residents. This testing is necessary because growing evidence suggests that persons with COVID-19 become infectious days prior to developing symptoms, and many develop only mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. This means that in congregate living settings like nursing homes where physical distancing is difficult to maintain, moving beyond only symptom-based screening is unlikely to detect all cases. To date, 40% of the individuals in Wisconsin who lost their lives due to COVID-19 lived in a nursing home.

Who can get tested? All nursing home residents and NCHC employees who work in nursing homes. Additionally, all employees who work in restricted areas on the Wausau Campus and Pine Crest will also be included in the testing, including non-nursing home specific employees.

Who is conducting the testing? North Central Health Care nursing staff will be completing the testing for all residents and employees.

Is this testing required? The tests are voluntary for both employees and residents, but NCHC encourages that employees and residents get the test completed so that we have a point in time assessment of the current status of Covid-19 within our facilities.

Is there a consent form to complete? Yes. Verbal consents will be taken for residents so that family do not have to enter the facility.

Is there a cost to residents or employees? No.

Will I get my individual results? The result reported back is either positive or negative. The Directors of Nursing (Connie Gliniecki and Ryan Hanson) and NCHC Employee Health will receive all test results confidentially. You will only be notified if your results are positive for Covid-19.



North Central Health Care

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How long will it take to get test results? Tests will be processed and results returned within 48 hours.

What happens if I test positive or an employee tests positive?

Residents who test positive on the Wausau Campus or at Pine Crest will be evaluated to ensure medical attention is not warranted, appropriate PPE will be utilized during staff interactions, and they will be quarantined for 14 days. Both Pine Crest and the Wausau Campus have Covid-19 units which are prepared to be utilized as needed. Employees who test positive will stop care and leave the facility immediately if they are at work, be required to follow our current policies for return to work and be advised to seek medical attention. NCHC will report all positive Covid-19 cases to appropriate public health and state/federal agencies and notify residents and families by 5:00 pm the following day after receiving notification of a positive test result.

If a staff member is positive and I had contact with that person, will I need to be quarantined even if my test is negative? Generally, no. With all employees wearing PPE which greatly lowers transmission risk and all staff being tested at the same time, screening and self-monitoring will continue. Each case will be looked at individually, and if needed, further action such as retesting or quarantining may be asked for under certain circumstances.

Will residents or patients who were in contact with a positive staff member be notified? We will follow guidance from the health department in making this determination.

If I am negative today, it only means I am negative at that point in time. How often will I need to be tested? This is a point-in-time test requested by the WI DHS, and regular testing is not currently planned. Now that testing supplies are readily available, and testing access is increased, we will be able to respond to suspected cases quickly. If the state requests repeat testing in the future, we will comply. Antibody testing is becoming more available, and it is not yet clear how this fits into the state's, or our, plan.

Will newly hired staff be tested before or during orientation? Yes. New hires that will work in NCHC restricted zones and nursing homes will be tested.

Why was the decision made to test now? This is a state initiative and is discussed in DHS COVID-19 Health Alert # 8. It requests testing of asymptomatic patients and staff in congregate living situations, nursing homes, and similar environments. Given the proximity and overlap of our inpatient and crisis services with the CBRF and Nursing home, testing in both facilities is also prudent.

www.norcen.org

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