



**Department  
of Health**

**Veterans Home**

# **New York State Veterans Home St. Albans**

# **Pandemic Emergency Plan**

New York State Veterans Home at St. Albans  
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# Approval and Implementation

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This Pandemic Emergency Plan (PEP) has been approved for implementation by:

*Neville A. Goldson*

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Neville A. Goldson, Administrator  
New York State Veterans Home at St. Albans

**9/13/2022**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Seydonie Ralliford*

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New York State Veterans Home at St. Albans

**9/13/2022**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Record of Changes

Table 1: Record of Changes

Version #	Implemented By	Revision Date	Description of Change
1.0	Neville A. Goldson Administrator	9/14/2020	Effective 9/15/2020
2.0	Neville A. Goldson Administrator	12/08/2021	Revision 12/08/2021
3.0	Neville A. Goldson Administrator	9/13/2022	Revision 9/13/22

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# 1 Background

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## 1.1 Introduction

Infectious diseases are caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi. The circumstances of infectious disease emergencies, including ones that rise to the level of a pandemic, vary by multiple factors, including type of biological agent, scale of exposure, mode of transmission and intentionality.

The New York State Veterans Home follows effective strategies for preventing infectious diseases and has taken steps to assess and improve preparedness for responding to a pandemic.

To protect the well-being of residents, staff, and visitors, the following Pandemic Emergency Plan has been developed and has been informed by the conduct of facility-based and community-based risk assessments and collaboration with community partners, such as healthcare providers, county emergency services and public health services. The Plan also takes into consideration guidance provided by the New York State Department of Health and the local county health department.

In addition to an annual assessment, several resources have been and will continue to be utilized from federal, state and county governments, emergency management agencies/authorities, and trade organizations (NYSHFA and LeadingAge NY) as well as information gained from the parent organization, Health Facilities Management (HFM), other New York State Veterans Homes, and actual experience to create and update this plan.

This PEP is a living document that will be reviewed annually, at a minimum, and updated as needed.

## 1.2 Scope

The scope of this Plan extends to any infectious disease or health pandemic that disrupts, or has the potential to significantly disrupt, the provision of normal standards of care and/or continuity of operations.

The plan provides the facility with a framework for the Home's pandemic preparedness and response and utilizes the latest guidance from state and federal agencies.

## 1.3 Public Health Law Amendment

Chapter 114 of the Laws of 2020 created a new subdivision 12 to section 2803 of the Public Health Law. The new subdivision requires that each residential health care facility (nursing home), to prepare and make available to the public on the facility's website, and immediately upon request, a Pandemic Emergency Plan (PEP). This plan will address the requirements outlined in statute.

## 1.4 Components of the Plan

The Plan provides a structure or guide for the following areas:

- Communications
- Infection Protection
- Personal Protective Equipment Supply
- Preserving a Resident's Place in the Home
- Communicable Disease Reporting

## 2 Communications

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### 2.1 Communicating with Residents, Families and Guardians

The Home shall:

- a. Designate the resident's assigned Social Worker, upon admission and regularly as needed, but at least annually, determine a record of all authorized family members and guardians, and include secondary (back-up) authorized contacts, as applicable.
- b. Update authorized family members or guardians of residents infected with the pandemic infectious disease at least once per day and upon a change in the resident's condition. This shall be done at no cost by phone, email or by a manner that is agreed upon by the resident and their authorized representative, family member or guardian. This will be assigned to a Social Worker or a member of the Interdisciplinary Care Team and will be documented in the medical record.
- c. Update all residents and authorized family members or guardians once per week on the number of pandemic infections and pandemic deaths at the Home, including residents with a pandemic-related infection who pass away for reasons other than such infection (e.g., COVID positive residents who pass away for reasons other than COVID-19). This shall be done at no cost by letter or email, or in a manner that is agreed upon by the resident and their authorized representative, family member or guardian. This will be completed by Administration or delegated to a Department Head.
- d. Provide all residents with daily access to free remote videoconferencing, or similar communication methods, with authorized family members or guardians. This will be provided through the Recreation Department and will be communicated routinely upon admission and by regular communication between the Recreation staff and the resident and/or their representative, family member or guardian in a method selected by them.

# 3 Infection Protection

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## 3.1 Infection Protection Plans for Staff, Residents and Families

The Home's plan includes:

- a. If a resident requires readmission to the Home after hospitalization for the pandemic infectious disease, the Infection Prevention and Control Committee will consider multiple factors. Such factors will include, but not be limited to, the infection control requirements, staffing requirements and availability, available Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), current census, bed availability in the designated cohort areas, the number of staff and resident pandemic cases, current community cases, and the ability of the Home to provide quality resident care.
- b. The Home shall comply with all other applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to 10 NYCRR 415.19, 415.3(i)(3)(iii) and 415.26(i); and 42 CFR 483.15(e).
- c. In the event there are only one or a few residents with the pandemic disease in the Home, they will be isolated in their room and placed on precautions until a test result confirms their status. If the test is negative, they will remain in quarantine with precautions in their room until their symptoms subside. If necessary, the medical provider may order additional tests to rule out virus transmission.
- d. If there is more than one resident with the pandemic infectious disease, the Infection Prevention and Control Committee will determine corresponding plans for cohorting, including:
  - i. Use of part of a unit, such as a group of rooms at the end of a Unit hallway.
  - ii. All rooms have bathrooms, which should assist in reducing risk of disease spread.
  - iii. The number of readmissions will not exceed the number of rooms in the cohort area.
- e. The Infection Prevention and Control Committee will ensure proper identification of the area for residents with the pandemic infectious disease, including demarcating reminders for healthcare personnel. This will be completed immediately by Infection Preventionist or Nursing Supervisors, using signage approved by the Infection Prevention and Control Committee and placed at the entrance to the unit or outside the resident room.



- f. The Infection Prevention and Control Committee will determine the procedures for preventing other residents from entering the cohort area. This may be accomplished by setting up visual barriers or other physical barriers consistent with Life Safety regulations. It may also be signage with regular staff monitoring. The method will be communicated to all staff.
- g. The Home's Administrator and parent organization, Health Facilities Management, will regularly determine cohorting needs and capabilities through the Home's Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Committee. If the Home is unable to set up cohort areas or can no longer sustain cohorting efforts, the Administrator and/or Infection Control Preventionist will notify the regional NYS Department of Health (DOH) office and local health department (LHD) immediately.

# 4 Personal Protective Equipment

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## 4.1 Supply of PPE

Logistics functions prior to an incident include identifying and monitoring emergency resource levels, and executing mutual aid agreements, resource service contracts, and memorandums of understanding. These functions are carried out pre-incident by the Finance Officer/designee and are closely monitored throughout the pandemic as well.

- a. The Home will maintain a two-month (60 day) supply stored in the Home or in a climate-controlled storage unit in close proximity to the building.
- b. The supply will be based on census and a burn rate based on DOH existing guidance and regulations; in the absence of such guidance, the Home will consult the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) PPE burn rate calculator.
- c. The Home will adjust the supply based on protocols outlined in guidance that are specific to the pathogen and illness circulating at the time of the pandemic. Whenever possible, the Home will strive to maintain a supply that can handle worst case scenarios without implementing shortage or other mitigation efforts.
- d. The supply level will also be based on the PPE necessary for both residents and staff in-order to continue to provide services and support to residents, given the current guidance on various supplies and strategies from the CDC.
- e. Supplies to be maintained include, but are not limited to:
  - N95 respirators
  - Surgical or procedure masks
  - Face shield
  - Eye protection, i.e., goggles
  - Gowns / isolation gowns
  - Disposable gloves
  - Hand sanitizer
  - Disinfectants in accordance with current EPA Guidance

# 5 Preserving A Resident's Place

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## 5.1 Readmission

The Home has a long-standing practice of maintaining a resident's place at the Home when the resident is hospitalized. Exceptions may be if the resident's care cannot continue to be provided in a safe and quality manner or if they are considered a risk to the health and safety of others. Such exceptions will be compliant with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to 18 NYCRR 505.9(d)(6) and 42 CFR 483.15(e).

# 6 Communicable Disease Reporting

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## 6.1 Importance of Reporting

As a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), reporting to the New York State Department of Health (DOH) is required to detect intra-facility outbreaks, geographic trends, and identify emerging infectious diseases.

The collection of outbreak data enables DOH to inform health care facilities of potential risks and preventive actions.

Further, DOH, as needed, may provide consultation, laboratory support and on-site assistance in outbreak investigations.

These efforts are to protect public health and ensure the safety of health care facilities.

## 6.2 What Must be Reported

- a. The Home will report suspected or confirmed communicable diseases as mandated under the New York State Sanitary Code (10 NYCRR 2.10), as well as by 10 NYCRR 415.19.8.
- b. Any outbreak or significant increase in nosocomial infections above the norm or baseline in nursing home residents or employees will be reported to DOH by the Infection Control Preventionist or designee. This may be done electronically via the Nosocomial Outbreak Reporting Application (NORA). NORA is a DOH Health Commerce System Application. Alternatively, faxing an Infection Control Nosocomial Report Form (DOH 4018) on the DOH public website may also be done.
- c. The Infection Prevention and Control Committee will conduct surveillance that is adequate to identify background rates and detect significant increases above those

- rates. Healthcare associated infection outbreaks may also be reported to the LHD as requested.
- d. A single case of a reportable communicable disease or any unusual disease (defined as a newly apparent or emerging disease or syndrome that could possibly be caused by a transmissible infectious agent or microbial toxin) will be reported to the LHD by the Infection Control Nurse or designee.
    - i. If the reportable communicable disease is suspected or confirmed to be acquired at the Home, it must also be reported to the DOH by the Infection Control Preventionist or designee. This can be done electronically via the NORA, or, by faxing an Infection Control Nosocomial Report Form (DOH 4018).
  - e. Reports must be made to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and submitted within 24 hours of diagnosis. However, some diseases warrant prompt action and should be reported immediately by phone.
  - f. Categories and examples of reportable healthcare-associated infections include:
    - i. An outbreak or increased incidence of disease due to any infectious agent (e.g. staphylococci, vancomycin resistant enterococci, Pseudomonas, Clostridioides difficile, Klebsiella, Acinetobacter) occurring in residents or in persons working in the facility.
    - ii. Intra-facility outbreaks of influenza, COVID-19, gastroenteritis, pneumonia, or respiratory syncytial virus.
    - iii. Foodborne outbreaks.
    - iv. Infections associated with contaminated medications, replacement fluids, or commercial products.
  - g. A list of diseases and information on proper reporting include:
    - i. Single cases of healthcare-associated infection due to any of the diseases on the Communicable Disease Reporting list. For example, single cases of nosocomial acquired Legionella, measles virus, invasive group A beta hemolytic Streptococcus.
    - ii. A single case involving Staphylococcus aureus showing reduced susceptibility to vancomycin.
    - iii. Clusters of tuberculin skin test conversions.
    - iv. A single case of active pulmonary or laryngeal tuberculosis in a nursing home resident or employee.

- v. Increased or unexpected morbidity or mortality associated with medical devices, practices or procedures resulting in significant infections and/or hospital admissions.
  - vi. Closure of a unit or service due to infections.
- h. Additional information for making a communicable disease report:
- i. The Home's Infection Control Preventionist or designee will contact the DOH regional office epidemiologist or the DOH Central Office Healthcare Epidemiology and Infection Control Program for general questions and infection control guidance or if additional information is needed about reporting to NORA.
  - ii. For assistance after hours, nights and weekends call the New York State Watch Center (Warning Point) may be called at (518) 292-2200.
  - iii. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Provider Access Line (PAL) at (866) 692-3641 or the DOH's Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at (518) 473-4439 or, after hours, at (866) 881-2809. To obtain reporting forms (DOH-389), call (518) 474-0548

# 7 Authorities and References

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This plan may be informed by the following authorities and references:

- Chapter 114 of the Laws of 2020
- DAL NH 20-09 Required Annual Pandemic Emergency Plan for All Nursing Homes.

August 20, 2020.