

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
Division of Licensing and Protection
HC 2 South
280 State Drive
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2060

December 4, 2020

Dear Long-Term Care Facility Administrator,

The State of Vermont has a limited supply of BinaxNOW point-of-care antigen test kits that we would like to make available to both CMS certified nursing homes and state licensed long-term care facilities.

This communication will address the requirements for use of these antigen tests for each type of facility. Please read carefully. For additional information, please refer to the Health Alert COVID-19 Testing Recommendations for Long-term Care Facilities sent from the Vermont Department of Health dated December 4, 2020.

Residential Care Homes, Assisted Living Facilities, and Therapeutic Community Residences

These kits can be used to test *symptomatic* staff and patients for COVID-19 and the results are available in 15 minutes. Prior to obtaining these test kits, your facility must obtain a CLIA certificate by CMS (or partner with a facility that has a CLIA license) and confirm that you are able to meet the following requirements:

- Participate in an online training hosted by Abbott, the manufacturer of the test cards, before use.
- Obtain a medical provider's order for the test prior to administering the test.
- Utilize existing facility staff to appropriately conduct the test. This is not a self-administered test and must be done by trained staff person.
- Wear appropriate PPE when administering the test.
- Dispose of all test card materials as biohazardous waste.
- Report results to the Vermont Department of Health within 24 hours. Options for reporting are:
 - HL7 2.5.1 message
 - Automated spreadsheet using the National Flat File schema
 - State of Vermont COVID-19 Test Result Reporting Form. To use this option, register for the reporting form here: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/disease-control/disease-reporting/lab-result-reporting>
 - National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) **Point-of-Care Test Reporting Tool** (required for CMS-certified long-term care facilities, satisfies reporting to the Health Department)
 - Until electronic reporting is set up, only positive results shall be faxed to the Health Department at 802-951-4061. The faxed report should include patient demographic information (name, DOB, contact information), test type and result, and reporting

facility information (name and contact information). No reporting of negative or inconclusive results is needed until electronic reporting is set up.

- Offer this test at no charge to the symptomatic resident or staff person.
- Use the test cards prior to their expiration date.

Use existing [CDC guidelines](#) and [Health Department resources](#) for information on interpreting results and determining when confirmatory PCR testing is needed.

CMS Certified and State Licensed Nursing Homes

The availability of BinaxNOW test kits does not supplant the need for routine surveillance testing in accordance with CMS and State of Vermont requirements. These test cards are simply another tool to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your facility. Your nursing home will be sent a supply of BinaxNow tests to enable you to test staff daily, regardless of whether or not they are symptomatic. In order to use the BinaxNOW antigen tests please:

- Participate in an online training hosted by Abbott, the manufacturer of the test cards, before use.
- Obtain a medical provider's order for the test prior to administering the test.
- Utilize existing facility staff to appropriately conduct the test. This is not a self-administered test and must be done by trained staff person.
- Wear appropriate PPE when administering the test.
- Dispose of all test card materials as biohazardous waste.
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- Offer this test at no charge to the symptomatic resident or staff person.
- Use the test cards prior to their expiration date.

Use existing [CDC guidelines](#) and [Health Department resources](#) for information on interpreting results and determining when confirmatory PCR testing is needed.

If you would like to obtain these test kits, you must start by obtaining a CLIA certificate and completing the attached form. You can email the form to: Suzanne.Leavitt@vermont.gov. If your facility has a CLIA certificate, you can order from the [COVID-19 resource order form](#).

Additional test cards may be available for order on a biweekly basis.

Thank you for the incredible work you do every day to protect your staff and residents from COVID-19. We hope this additional resource will assist in meeting your future testing needs.

Please reach out with questions.

Thank you,

Suzanne

Suzanne Leavitt, RN MS

Director, Survey and Certification

Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living