



COVID-19 Updates: Gov. Kemp, DPH & GEMA Prioritize Testing for Most Vulnerable, First Responders, Health Workers

Gov. Kemp, DPH & GEMA Prioritize Testing for Most Vulnerable, First Responders, Health Workers

Yesterday, Governor Brian Kemp, DPH, and GEMA issued a joint statement which prioritizes COVID-19 testing for "Georgia's elderly, those with chronic, underlying health conditions, those who live in a long-term care facility like an assisted living facility or nursing home, and those serving on the front lines as a healthcare worker, first responder, long-term care facility staffer, or law enforcement." [Click here to read the full statement.](#)

Residents Returning from Receiving Essential Health Care Services Outside of the Center

While all healthcare providers are receiving ongoing communication from CDC about precautions to decrease the risk of COVID-19 transmission, it is prudent to enhance precautions when residents return from receiving essential health care services delivered outside of the center. For example, if a resident has to go out for dialysis, consider cleaning procedures for items such as wheelchairs and clothing upon their return. Carefully monitor these residents to ensure early identification and intervention for any change in condition.

PPE

PPE continues to be a significant need across the healthcare continuum. Please adhere to the guidelines provided by DPH to request supplies (see below) and follow [CDC recommendations](#) to extend the use of existing PPE. Some providers have shared success in their ability to make online purchases of items such as commercial masks and coveralls.

Guidelines for Notifying DPH of PPE Needs:

DPH [Public Health Districts](#) are coordinating requests for PPE and would ask that you click [here](#) to indicate your PPE needs. If you experience difficulties or have questions, please reach out to your [regional healthcare coalition facilitator](#) and notify GHCA Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Hannah Byers at hbyers@ghca.info or (770) 827-7460. Hannah will continue to communicate with DPH. Additionally, we recommend that providers contact your local hospital(s) and other health care providers in your area about possibly sharing PPE supplies. [Click here for a DPH webinar highlighting how providers can submit requests for PPE.](#)

Fingerprint Screening

GHCA continues to advocate for official guidance from DCH related to requirements for fingerprint background checks. Many screening locations have closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, impeding the ability of providers to meet this requirement. Providers are encouraged to conduct GCIC credentialed background checks on new hires as we await additional guidance. The current rule allows a 30-day grace period for a new employee to work while fingerprint screening is pending.

GHCA appreciates the efforts of our members to keep their residents safe during this strenuous time. We will continue to monitor updates related to COVID-19 and keep members apprised. In addition to providing email updates, members can access a number of helpful resources for providers on our [Infection Control webpage](#). Additionally, should you have questions or need assistance please contact GHCA Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Hannah Byers at hbyers@ghca.info or (770) 827-7460.