



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DATE: June 23, 2020
TO: Assisted Living Facilities
FROM: Tara Ragland, Director, Division of Licensing Programs
SUBJECT: ALF Recommendations for Reopening

Virginia's assisted living facility (ALF) providers have worked tirelessly during the COVID-19 pandemic to try to ensure the health and safety of their residents and staff. As we begin to ease restrictions throughout the Commonwealth, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is committed to helping you as you reopen your facilities to visitors. While restricting visitors was prudent to minimize risk to residents and staff, we know that ongoing separation from family and friends has created feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression for many residents. However, because reopening facilities to visitors and other service providers carries risk, we would like to provide some general best practices, along with resources for more specific information.

The attached document, *Recommendations for Reopening Assisted Living Facilities*, outlines recommendations and best practices for ALFs when considering re-opening. Each individual facility should consider the reopening criteria and move through reopening phases based on assessment of its own specific circumstances. Additionally, we want to remind ALF providers of infection control requirements set forth in the Virginia Administrative Code at [22VAC40-73, Standards for Assisted Living Facilities](#).

Under [22VAC40-73-100](#), facilities are required to update their infection control programs in response to COVID-19 to address surveillance, prevention, and control of disease and infection. Revisions to infection control plans must be consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) bloodborne pathogens regulations. In addition, infection control programs should incorporate recommendations from VDSS and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

In addition, if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, facilities must follow all recommendations made by VDH to prevent or control transmission of the infectious agent in the facility.

The ALF standards specify elements for development and implementation of an infection control program, as well as infection control training requirements for all levels of staff and volunteers. Your licensing inspector may request a copy of your updated infection control policies and procedures in response to COVID-19.

Please contact your inspector if you have any questions. Thank you again for the difficult work you have done over the last several months to care for Virginia's most vulnerable citizens—your residents—during this unprecedented health emergency.