

Dear Nursing Home Administrators,

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is partnering with HealthQuest Esoterics to bring a free, Nucleic Acid Amplification (PCR) COVID-19 testing program to your residents and staff.

How does the program work?

After enrollment, HealthQuest Esoterics will provide your facility with enough test kits to swab all residents and staff members. Once your clinical team completes specimen collection, the test kits will be sent to HealthQuest via FedEx for diagnostic processing. Results, including individual lab reports, will be provided via a secure portal within 24-48 hours. If a case or cluster is detected, Investigators and Medical Epidemiologists from the New York City and New York State Departments of Health will provide support around isolation, quarantine and infection control protocols.

When is testing for respiratory viruses indicated?

As per [guidance from New York State](#), facility-wide testing (including all healthcare personnel and residents, regardless of vaccination status) should be performed when a single new case of COVID-19 is identified in a healthcare worker or resident. This includes facility-wide testing immediately, and subsequent testing of all healthcare personnel and residents who test negative every 3 to 7 days until testing identifies no new cases of COVID-19 for at least 14 days since the most recent positive result.

If no cases of COVID-19 have been identified in a nursing home for at least 14 days, only routine screening of healthcare personnel who are not fully vaccinated should be performed. Weekly facility-wide testing is not indicated. Any healthcare personnel or resident with symptoms concerning for COVID-19 should be tested immediately. These processes are consistent with the most recent [Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\) guidance](#).

As the symptoms for COVID-19 and flu can be similar, the [CDC recommends](#) testing residents who are symptomatic for [both viruses](#). This program supports testing for both SARS-CoV-2 and influenza A and B through Influenza SARS-CoV-2 (Flu SC2) Multiplex Assay. Tests for both viruses are run on the same swab.

Who is eligible to participate?

- Following the identification of a recent case in the facility: All residents and staff, regardless of vaccination status.
- Routine screening: Staff who are not fully vaccinated and are mandated by New York State to be tested.

Cost?

This service is completely free to residents and staff. Insurance will not be collected or billed.

How does my facility enroll in the Program?

Email covidtestingcsiru@health.nyc.gov an indication of interest and a Testing Coordinator will be in touch.

We look forward to working with you,
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, COVID-19 Congregate Settings Investigation and Response Unit