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Commissioner

March 31, 2020

TO: Nursing Home and Comprehensive Rehabilitation Hospital Administrators,
Directors of Nursing, and Hospital Discharge Planners

FROM: Judith M. Persichilli, R.N., B.S.N., M.A.
Commissioner

SUBJECT: Hospital Discharges and Admissions to Post-Acute Care Settings

On March 9, 2020 Governor Philip D. Murphy issued Executive Order No. 103, declaring a Public Health Emergency in New Jersey as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to respond to the increase in positive cases there is an urgent need to expand hospital capacity to be able to meet the demand for patients with COVID-19 requiring acute care. As a result, this directive is being issued to clarify expectations post-acute care settings receiving patients/residents returning from hospitalization and for accepting new admissions.

The New Jersey Department of Health directs hospital discharge planning staff and post-acute care facilities to carefully review this guidance with all staff directly involved in patient/resident admissions, transfers, and discharges.

During this global health emergency, all post-acute care settings must comply with the expedited receipt of patients/residents discharging from hospitals. Patients/residents are deemed appropriate for discharge to the post-acute care setting upon a determination by the hospital physician or designee that the resident is medically stable for return. A rapid review of necessary resources to provide adequate, safe care in the post-acute care setting is imperative during this time.

Hospital discharge planners must confirm to the post-acute care setting, by telephone, that the patient/resident is medically stable for discharge. Comprehensive discharge instructions must be provided by the hospital prior to the transport of a patient/resident to the post-acute care setting.

No patient/resident shall be denied re-admission or admission to the post-acute care setting solely based on a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19. Persons under investigation for COVID-19 who have undergone testing in the hospital shall not be discharged until results are available. Post-acute care facilities are prohibited from requiring a hospitalized patient/resident who is determined medically stable to be tested for COVID-19 prior to admission or readmission.

Information for healthcare providers on COVID-19 is available on the New Jersey Department of Health website at https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_healthcare.shtml . As always, strict adherence to infection prevention and control measures and environmental cleaning must be made a priority during this public health emergency.

Thank you for your ongoing support and cooperation in responding to COVID-19. General questions or comments about this advisory can be sent to Jean DeVitto jean.devitto@doh.nj.gov .



Enclosure