



State of New Jersey  
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Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
Lt. Governor

JUDITH M. PERSICILLI, RN, BSN, MA  
Commissioner

May 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

First, I would like to thank everyone copied here for the work that you are doing to care for your staff and residents during these unprecedented circumstances. We know you care deeply for those you serve and we cannot be more grateful for the sacrifices and care you give. On behalf of the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH), I want to extend our sincere gratitude.

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus. Most cases of COVID-19 are mild to moderate, like the common cold. The disease can be more severe in older adults and people with chronic health conditions. The virus is most likely spread from person-to-person by droplets when coughing and from contact with surfaces where those droplets have landed. Since this virus is new, health authorities continue to carefully watch how this virus spreads.

The DOH and local public health authorities are working with Long Term Care facilities across New Jersey to make sure that they are appropriately implementing their contagious outbreak plans to mitigate infection transmission and keep residents and staff safe.

The safety of the residents that live and the staff that works in these facilities, is our primary concern. For this reason, the DOH in cooperation with Virtua Health system launched a pilot program to create a baseline to help us inform and improve the care given to residents at your facilities. We hope that the knowledge gained by testing all residents will help us to save lives as we continue to respond to this pandemic.

Best Regards,

*Marcela Maziarz /s/*

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Marcela Ospina Maziarz, MPA  
Deputy Commissioner