

# COVID-19 Q&A Hour for Long Term Care



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program

Shoreline, WA

# Housekeeping



Attendees will be in listen only mode



Self-mute your lines when not speaking



Type questions into the question window. Please include the type of facility you are from in your question (e.g., NH) and indicate your county.



Nursing Home

Participants from long-term care, regulatory, public health



No confidential information presented or discussed. This is an educational webinar and does not constitute legal advice.



Local guidance may differ, please consult with your Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ):

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions>

# This is the LTC COVID-19 Q&A Hour!

A chance to connect, ask questions, and learn about the COVID-19 response and infection prevention guidance



# Panelists

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# WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## ICAR PROGRAM DETAILS

*Our free, non-regulatory ICARs provide facilities with infection prevention recommendations and resources on how to keep residents and staff safe.*

### What We Do

- Provide support with an infection prevention expert
- Assist with addressing gaps in your current infection control protocols for COVID-19 or other infections
- Offer up-to-date guidance and resources

### Who We Serve

- Long Term Care Facilities (Assisted, Skilled, Behavioral Health, Nursing facilities, and Adult Family Homes)
- Outpatient Settings
- Acute and Critical Access Hospitals

### To Learn More or Schedule an In-Person or Virtual Visit:

<http://doh.wa.gov/ICAR>

### Contact Us:

[HAI-FieldTeam@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-FieldTeam@doh.wa.gov) (General)



### In Partnership With

- Local Health Jurisdictions
- LeadingAge Washington
- Washington Health Care Association
- Adult Family Home Council of WA State
- Washington State Hospital Association



## WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

### HAI-AR SECTION EMAIL ADDRESSES

*Please refer to the table below to find the email most appropriate for your needs*

Email Path	Description
<a href="mailto:HAI@doh.wa.gov">HAI@doh.wa.gov</a>	General healthcare associated infection questions
<a href="mailto:HAI-Covid@doh.wa.gov">HAI-Covid@doh.wa.gov</a>	COVID19-specific healthcare associated infection questions
<a href="mailto:HAIepiOutbreakTeam@doh.wa.gov">HAIepiOutbreakTeam@doh.wa.gov</a>	Epidemiological outbreak assistance and healthcare associated infection questions
<a href="mailto:HAI-FieldTeam@doh.wa.gov">HAI-FieldTeam@doh.wa.gov</a>	Schedule an ICAR for your facility
<a href="mailto:HAI-FITTesting@doh.wa.gov">HAI-FITTesting@doh.wa.gov</a>	Respiratory Protection related questions <a href="http://www.doh.wa.gov/ltrcpp">www.doh.wa.gov/ltrcpp</a>

# Fit Test Reminder

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Contact the DOH Occupational Health Team if you:

- Have been waiting for your initial fit testing since 2021
- Have questions about learning how to conduct your own fit testing
- Want access to the 3M online medical evaluation (free of charge to you for a limited time)

[HAI-FitTest@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-FitTest@doh.wa.gov)

Fit testing for requests made in 2021 will conclude at the end of April 2022.

# Project Firstline Podcast

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## Episodes

1. Introduction and HAIs
2. PPE
3. Hand Hygiene
4. MDROs
5. ALFs and SNFs
6. Hospital Settings
7. *Candida auris*
8. Coming soon:  
Respiratory Protection



## Purpose

- Discuss and identify the importance and impact of infection prevention on our lives and the lives of our community
- [Project Firstline | Washington State Department of Health](#)





Long-Term  
Care COVID-19  
Immunization  
Champion  
Award



[Long-Term Care COVID-19 Immunization Champion Award | Washington State Department of Health](#)

# Long Term Care Facility Booster

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- There is support for onsite vaccinations for residents and staff
  - Long Term Care Pharmacy
  - Local Health Jurisdiction
  - Department of Health survey to request help:
    - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DQ5K9WV>
  - Contact [COVID.Vaccine@doh.wa.gov](mailto:COVID.Vaccine@doh.wa.gov)
- Onsite support may encourage staff to get vaccinated because of the ease of access

# COVID-19 Reporting Update



**The Bi-weekly COVID-19 Facility Survey reporting is not necessary, effective immediately.**

- The Facility Survey reporting link will no longer be active or accessible on 04/30/2022.
- Please enter data directly into National Health and Safety Network (NHSN) or establish active NHSN user accounts for direct reporting.

**Facilities Must Continue Complaint Resolution Unit (CRU) Reporting**

- Reporting of COVID-19 outbreaks to CRU is required for ALF, AFH, NH and ESF.
- Reporting of COVID-19 staff and resident cases to CRU is strongly requested for all long-term care settings

# Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waived certificate

Federal regulations require a CLIA certificate when performing or acting on simple or over-the-counter (OTC) medical tests.

## **Examples:**

- Uses rapid COVID-19 tests for residents.
- Tests blood glucose for a resident.
- Dips test sticks in urine to test for ketones.
- Reports a test result to a medical provider who may adjust a resident's treatment in response to a test result.

# Medical Test Site Waiver (MTSW) License

In Washington state, a MTSW license meets both federal and state requirements.

When people talk about having a CLIA waiver, in Washington State, this means the MTSW license.

Applicants receive both the state license number and a CLIA number.



*Transforming Lives*

# Medical Test Site Waiver AFH / ESF Training

**April 14, 2022**

**2:00 pm to 3:45 pm**

Join on computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

+1 564-999-2000,,472281315#

Conference ID: 472 281 315#

Find a local number | Reset PIN

**April 18, 2022**

**2:00 pm to 3:45 pm**

Join on computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

+1 564-999-2000,,735793773#

Conference ID: 735 793 773#

Find a local number | Reset PIN

**For Questions Contact: Colleen Jensen [colleen.Jensen1@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:colleen.Jensen1@dshs.wa.gov)**

# NHSN Office Hours and FAQs for SNFs

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NHSN Vaccination team will review key points about the optional Event-Level COVID-19 Vaccination Forms and provide answers to frequently asked questions raised during the March training webinars.

**When: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 11:00AM Pacific Time**

**Topic: Event-Level COVID-19 Vaccination Forms: Office Hours and FAQs**

Register in advance for this webinar:

[https://cdc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_asYca\\_YuTj2gzJbMiFM7ow](https://cdc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_asYca_YuTj2gzJbMiFM7ow)

## We want to hear from you!

- Micro learning topics – what do you want to learn more about that will help with your facility infection control practices?
- Input your ideas into Question window noting “Topics: ...”
- Or send to [HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov)
- *Thank you!*



# Upcoming LTC Q&A Schedule

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Please plan to attend these upcoming micro learning sessions!

Today's discussion:

- Routine Testing Practices

Tentative April micro learning topics -

- Apr 21 & 28 – Norovirus Resources



# ROUTINE COVID-19 STAFF TESTING IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES

Healthcare-Associated Infections and  
Antimicrobial Resistance Section  
Office of Communicable Disease  
Epidemiology

# Who Conducts Staff Routine Testing?

## Current Guidance

DOH continues to recommend that all healthcare personnel be included in routine testing, regardless of vaccination status, if resources allow.

### Routine Testing for All Staff

Routine Testing for ALL STAFF			
Facility Type	Required/recommended	CDC Level of Community Transmission**	Minimum Frequency*
SNF	Required by <a href="#">CMS QSO-20-38-NH***</a>	Low transmission	Not recommended
		Moderate transmission	Once a week
		Substantial and high transmission	Twice a week
All other licensed LTCFs	Follow LHJ direction, otherwise, optional if resources are available.	Low transmission	Not recommended
		Moderate transmission	Once a week
		Substantial and high transmission	Twice a week

Reference: [Long-Term Care Facility Testing for Staff and Residents \(wa.gov\)](#)

# ROUTINE COVID-19 STAFF TESTING

Routine testing is separate from exposure testing or outbreak testing!



Routine testing can be done in the facility or other designated area

**Best Practice:** Designated area in the facility that is not easily accessible by the general public or residents

Symptomatic testing, or post-exposure testing, would generally be conducted in an outdoor area.

**Best Practice:** Using a drive through or outdoor testing location

# Before the Test

Testing Activity	Risks	Risk Mitigations
<p>1. Choose the area</p> <p>2. Perform a risk assessment of the area to identify what could go wrong, such as breathing in infectious material or touching contaminated objects and surfaces</p>	<p>Potential exposure to harmful biological material by aerosol generation</p>	<p>1. Considerations in choosing a testing location include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Well ventilated room</li> <li>○ Area allows for 6 feet social distancing of HCP present</li> <li>○ Choose an area with low traffic to avoid general public and resident access while testing is occurring</li> <li>○ Designate clean and dirty areas</li> </ul> <p>2. Have a testing policy in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follow the Core Principles of Infection Prevention</li> <li>○ Have a disinfection process             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before testing begins</li> <li>- After testing ends</li> <li>- Between each specimen collection</li> <li>- In the event of a specimen spill</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Reference: [Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 Rapid Testing Performed in Point-of-Care Settings | CDC](#)

# During the Test

Testing Activity	Risks	Risk Mitigations
Specimen collection	Exposure to harmful biological material by aerosol generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ensure there is no clutter, food and drinks present in the testing area</li><li>○ Have signage for when testing is occurring</li><li>○ Do not delay putting used testing supplies (waste) into the trash to prevent contamination of surfaces</li><li>○ Use hand hygiene and change gloves between handling specimens to prevent cross contamination</li></ul>

Reference: [Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 Rapid Testing Performed in Point-of-Care Settings | CDC](#)

# After the Test

Testing Activity	Risks	Risk Mitigations
Discarding materials from completed tests	Exposure to harmful biological material through spread of biological material across testing surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Follow Core Principles of Infection Prevention</li><li>○ Carefully pick up and dispose completed test materials in a designated waste container</li><li>○ Disinfect all testing surfaces after completion of testing</li></ul>

Reference: [Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 Rapid Testing Performed in Point-of-Care Settings | CDC](#)

# What to Avoid

- High traffic areas such as the lobby
- Poorly ventilated spaces
- Lack of disinfection
- Movement from dirty to clean areas
- Food and drink in testing area
- Mishandling waste
- Not social distancing
- Cluttered testing surfaces



# Questions?



To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email [civil.rights@doh.wa.gov](mailto:civil.rights@doh.wa.gov).

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# REVISED STRUCTURE FOR Q&A CALL

# A Modified Approach to the Q&A Call

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## Benefits to you:

- Ensure reliable answers to questions **prepared ahead of time** and presented on the slides during the call, including guidance source
- Reduce inconsistencies in responses
- Receive a copy of the slides with questions and answers soon after the call **instead of an FAQ spreadsheet**

# Revised Call Structure

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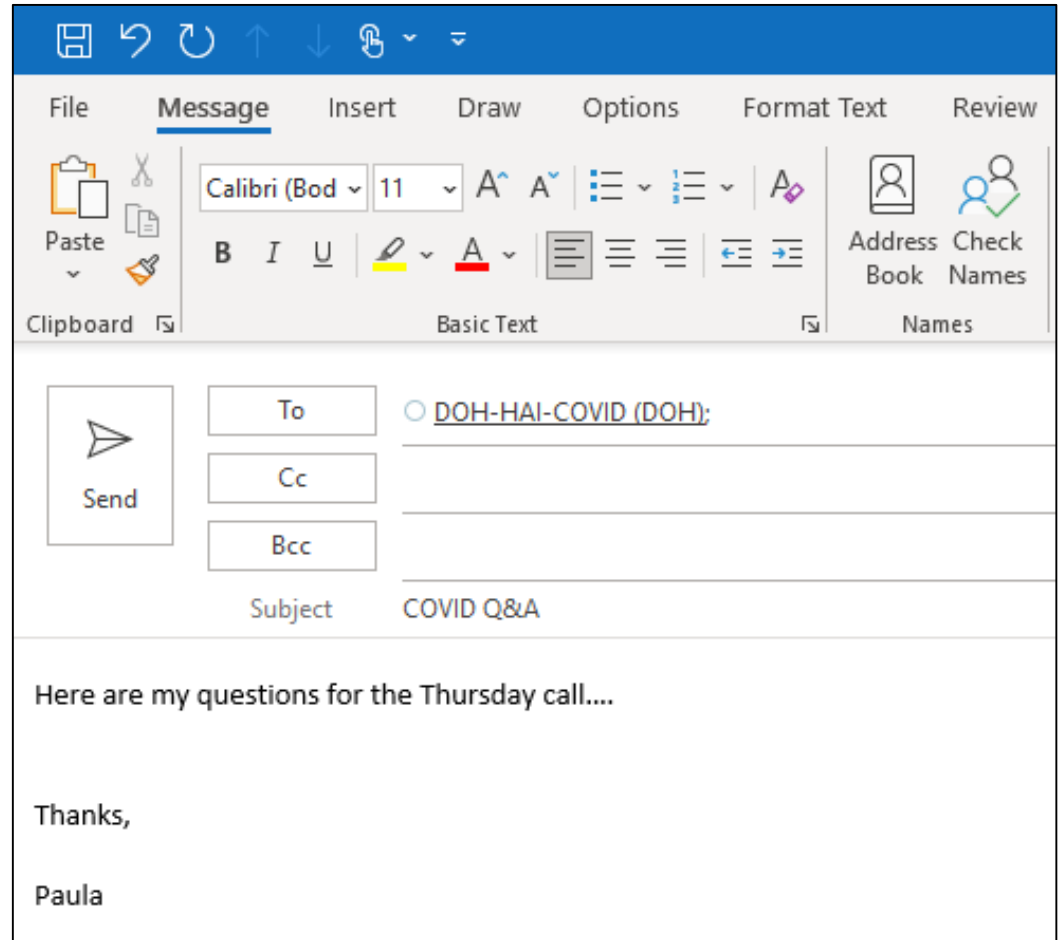
- **Submit questions by 5pm on Monday each week before the Thursday call**
- Submitted questions and answers will be presented during the call and sent out afterwards
- Follow up questions related to the slides will be addressed live
- Additional new topics will be answered live as time allows
- Any unanswered questions will be consolidated by topic and roll over to the following week's slides along with any new mailbox questions
- Complex questions specific to your facility are best sent to [HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov) to be answered individually

# How to Submit Your Questions

**Subject Line:**  
COVID Q&A Call

**Email:**  
[HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-COVID@doh.wa.gov)

**Due by:** COB Monday



# MAILBOX QUESTION AND ANSWER



# Question

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What is considered up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and how does it differ from fully vaccinated?



# Answer

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- **A person is fully vaccinated** two weeks after receiving all recommended doses in the primary series of their COVID-19 vaccination.
- **A person is up to date** with their COVID-19 vaccination if they have received all recommended doses in the primary series and one booster when eligible. Getting a second booster is not necessary to be considered up to date at this time.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>

# Question

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Do residents need to get a second booster?

# Answer

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- Boosters are not required, however being up to date with COVID-19 vaccines will provide the best protection.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>

# Question

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Is there an update on the requirement for newly hired caregivers to be fully vaccinated before they can provide direct care?

# Answer

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- It is still required that a HCW is fully vaccinated before they are hired and providing direct care
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement \(Proclamation 21-14.1\) for health care providers, workers and settings \(wa.gov\)](#)

# Question

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Do we need to verify the vaccine status of visitors?

# Answer

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No.

# QUESTION

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What are the policies/procedures for AGP in LTC facilities in Whatcom County



# Answer

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- PPE worn for staff during AGP's are dependent on CDC community transmission levels
  - In low to moderate transmission, follow standard precaution and wear PPE according to anticipated exposure to body fluid. For AGPs, this is likely a face mask, eye protection, and possible gloves and gown depending on the procedure and patient.
- [Preventing Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 During Aerosol Generating and Other Procedures \(wa.gov\)](#)

# Question

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What is the requirement for a respiratory protection program, including fit-testing, and where does that requirement come from?

# Answer

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- Chapter 296-842 WAC outlines respiratory protection requirements for employers

<https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-rules/chapter-pdfs/WAC296-842.pdf>

# Question

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Can we learn to do fit-testing so we can fit-test for our facility and where can I get supplies to do fit testing?

# Answer

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- There is no certification to be able to perform fit-testing, but must be able to perform fit-testing according to the respiratory standard

<https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-rules/chapter-pdfs/WAC296-842.pdf>

DOH is developing some materials and training that provide information on where to obtain fit-test supplies. Many can find at our website: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/lcrpp>

In the meantime, please email [HAI-FitTest@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HAI-FitTest@doh.wa.gov)

# Question

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Are masks still required in  
LTCFs?

# Answer

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- Yes, Secretary of Health Order requires every person in WA State to wear face coverings (masks) that covers their nose and mouth when they are indoors in LTCFs, subject to exceptions and exemptions.

[https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/1600/coronavirus//Secretary of Health Order 20-03 Statewide Face Coverings.pdf?uid=6257507518b0c](https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/1600/coronavirus//Secretary%20of%20Health%20Order%2020-03%20Statewide%20Face%20Coverings.pdf?uid=6257507518b0c)

# Question

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What PPE do I need to wear for COVID-19 specimen collection if the person swabbed themselves and am able to stay at least 6 ft away



# Answer

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- If the person is swabbing themselves and you are able to maintain at least 6 feet while they are swabbing, you should wear:
  - Gloves
  - Face mask (or respirator)
  - Eye protection

# Question

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Please review how to use the  
CDC Data Tracker.  
I thought our county was in low  
transmission

# Answer

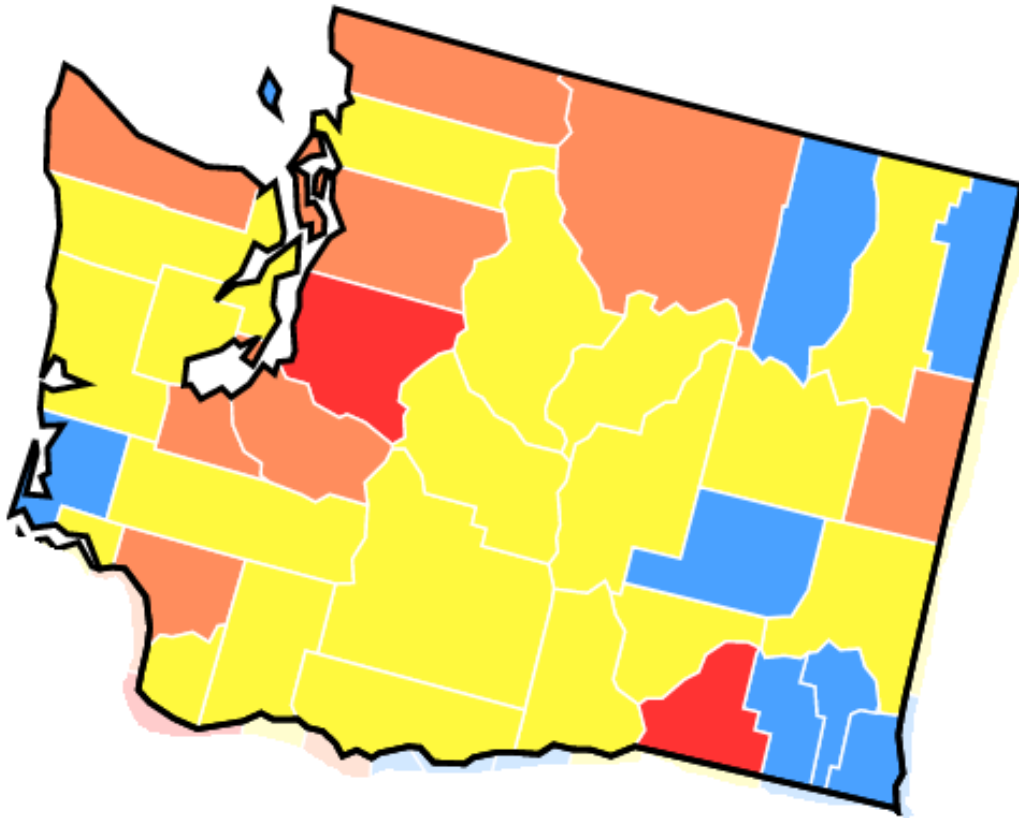
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- For current data, use the CDC Data Tracker Community Transmission rate (not the COVID-19 Community Level) [CDC COVID Data Tracker: County View](#)
- Select the state, county and select Community Transmission from drop down under Data type.
- CDC updates data daily and the rates can change from day to day, especially in smaller counties.
- Recommend checking Data Tracker weekly:
  - If level of community transmission increases to a higher level, you should begin testing staff at the higher frequency recommended.
  - If level of community transmission decreases to a lower level, continue testing at the higher frequency until the level of community transmission has remained lower for at least two weeks before reducing testing frequency.

[QSO-20-38-NH REVISED \(cms.gov\)](#)

# Answer

- Today's Community Transmission rates for Washington:



## Q & A Section

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Please type your questions into the question window and tell us what type of facility you are from (e.g., ALF, SNF, AFH) and what county you are in.