



May 27, 2020

To: Amber Leaders/Washington State Governor's Office

Re: Mass Testing in Post-Acute and Long-Term Care

Dear Amber:

Mass testing in long-term care facilities has been proposed as one of the foundational elements of Washington State's COVID -19 response and recovery plan. There is almost unanimous agreement that timely, accurate and widespread testing can be a key step in controlling the spread of this virus, especially amongst the state's most vulnerable populations.

In an effort to formulate a strategy to lessen both the health and economic impact of COVID going forward, a team of healthcare professionals who treat and serve geriatric and long-term care patients have conducted an analysis of the current COVID response in long-term care facilities. We have identified gaps and potential action plans to close those gaps.

Gaps and unmet needs:

- Shortages, or potential shortages, of testing materials available to test all staff and patients in all long-term care facilities
- Resistance to administering repeat nasopharyngeal testing, yet in order to make testing meaningful for outbreak prevention it will need to be repeated, probably weekly
- A shortage of healthcare providers to administer mass testing
- Test results aren't generated in a timely fashion
- No funding/lack of clarity around budgeting allocated to test asymptomatic or underinsured staff and patients

Proposed solutions:

- Prioritize state testing for long-term care facilities and other congregate living situations
 - Test entire resident and staff populations in facilities with any positive test results
 - Prioritize mass testing to counties with high pre-test probabilities (high incidence or COVID risk)
 - Perform regular randomized sample testing in counties with no/fewer outbreaks
- Streamline process of administering less invasive testing (nasal or oropharyngeal)



- Provide adequate state budget to fund COVID testing for vulnerable Washington State populations
 - Fund and provide appropriate staff to administer mass and repeat testing
 - Develop mobile testing units, staffed by local hospitals, DOH and volunteers

In addition, there are other components to combating COVID- 19, namely evidence-based infection control procedures and education, PPE, visitor restriction, social distancing and staffing that we are not addressing here.

The state of Pennsylvania recently proposed House Bill # 2510 (attached), outlining their plan to combat COVID-19, which includes and emphasizes a similar approach to testing, utilizing regional health collaboratives.

As some of the most experienced medical directors and advocates for high quality care for patients in PA/LTC we are eager to collaborate with you on best practices in the fight against COVID 19 in Washington.

Most Sincerely,

Sabine von Preyss-Friedman, MD, FACP, CMD
President, WA-PALTC

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