



ACCREDITATION ASSOCIATION
for AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE, INC.

CMS Shares Information and Important Reminders to Health Care Facilities Concerning 2019 Novel Coronavirus Illness (2019-nCoV)

Early in February, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) issued a public memo titled, "[Information for Healthcare Facilities Concerning 2019 Novel Coronavirus Illness \(2019-nCoV\)](#)." The document underscores the expectation that health care facilities adhere to best practices to prevent the spread of infection, as well as the ongoing importance of infection control policies and practices.

While the coronavirus was the catalyst for this communication from CMS, it also sheds light on ongoing infection prevention and control, particularly during the height of the flu season, [which has been elevated for 14 weeks](#) and has caused thousands of deaths in the United States already this winter.

Given the widespread effects of seasonal influenza and as concerns arise with the emerging 2019 Novel Coronavirus threat, AAAHC reminds every health care facility to adhere to standards for infection prevention and control in order to provide safe, high-quality care. To ensure patient and staff health and safety, CMS expects all health care staff and surveyors to comply with basic infection control practices and guides the health care community to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention [for more information](#).

The communication from CMS also encourages health care systems to review the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) use and availability, such as gloves, gowns, respirators, and eye protection and have PPE measures within their emergency plans. CMS continues to work diligently with the CDC, Accrediting Organizations such as AAAHC, and State Survey-Agencies to ensure that health care facility infection control programs meet health and safety standards.

Finally, facilities should review prescreening practices such as pre-admission calls and reception desk protocols to mitigate flow of infected patients through to clinical areas. Procedures should be postponed and rescheduled for patients with respiratory symptoms.

AAAHC's *1095 Strong, quality every day* philosophy emphasizes the importance of quality practices and readiness throughout the 1,095 days of the accreditation term. To learn more about AAAHC's best-practices for infection control, contact Cheryl Pistone, AAAHC clinical director of ambulatory accreditation, at cpistone@aaahc.org.