



November 18, 2020

Dear Commissioners and Directors from NYS Local Health Departments:

NYSACHO and the Home Care Association of New York State (HCA) are writing with resource information that may assist county health departments in planning and garnering COVID-19 testing and vaccination capacity. This letter provides information about training for in-home testing and vaccine collaboration with home care agencies.

Under a COVID-19 emergency grant funded by Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to HCA, home care and hospice clinicians (RN, RTs, LPNs) are being trained statewide to perform in-home specimen collection for COVID-19 testing. This training is aligned with NYS DOH regulations around specimen-collection and course material covers preparing and educating the patient; collection and specimen storage; advancing arrangements with laboratories; donning and doffing and other important protocols. Nearly 2,000 have already been trained, and thousands more are being encouraged to be enroll. The state Department of Health (DOH) has sent information on the program through the Health Commerce System (HCS) to all home care agencies and hospices in the state, and just posted rates and codes for certified home health agencies to use to bill for the testing. As the lead health strategists within New York's communities, we want to be certain that local health departments are aware of this resource.

If you manage a home care agency through your county health department or local public health office, **you can register your clinicians for this training at no charge at <https://hca-nys.org/testing>**. The program is open to all agencies public and private and all are being strongly encouraged to register and train. This training includes a pre-test and post-test with pass threshold. The entire process takes approximately 1.5 hours to complete. A certificate of completion is sent to clinician upon successful post-test.

Furthermore, home care agencies whose staff are trained to test are being encouraged to contact their county health department to offer availability and willingness to collaborate on in-home specimen collection for COVID-19 testing. If you have not done so already, NYSACHO and HCA jointly encourage county health departments to connect and coordinate with the home care agencies serving your communities. You may also want to directly encourage any agencies that have not yet trained, to do so also by registering through <https://hca-nys.org/testing>. This is especially timely now while the HCA grant is still active and with new COVID-19 surges already occurring across in the state.

Regarding planning for both flu and potential COVID-19 vaccine, we similarly suggest including your communities' home care agencies on your resource and partner list if you have not done so already. We will encourage home care agencies to offer support to local health departments as we move toward implementation of a COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan in New York State.

You will also find a HCANYS news brief on CHHA Billing for COVID-19 Specimen Collections at this link: <https://hca-nys.org/general-news/doh-outlines-chha-billing-for-covid-19-specimen-collections-take-our-training-today>

We are pleased to assist you in any way and to answer any questions you might have regarding this resource letter. Our contact information is below. We hope our collaboration is helpful to you in your COVID-19 and vaccination resource planning and development.

Sincerely



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