Preparing for **COVID-19**

As news of the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) continues, we are acutely aware of the risk this type of illness poses to the elderly and our long-term care communities.

If you don't already have a policy addressing your facility's plan in the event of an infectious outbreak, we recommend you complete one. The American Health Care Association and National Association for Assisted Living created a **sample policy** for guidance. You may also wish to review guidelines for **testing** of persons under investigation suspected of COVID-19.

Telehealth is poised as an ideal solution to assist with resident screening and support during outbreaks. Please let Avera eCARE® Senior Care know if you intend to include us in your infection control or epidemic policies.

To prevent the transmission of COVID-19, long-term care facilities should use the strategies known to reduce the spread of respiratory viruses:

- Monitor your staff and visitors to ensure hand hygiene protocols are followed.

- Review your isolation procedures and make sure staff follow them consistently.

- Review plans for cohorting residents who have become sick in the same room or wing to prevent the spread to other residents and staff, should the outbreak continue to grow.

- Remind staff, contractors and volunteers to stay home if they are sick **(see detailed guidance here.)**

- Post notices for visitors who are sick to stop visiting and work with families on alternate ways to visit their family members, like Skype, phone calls and email.

Wash your hands often

Stay home when you are sick

Cover your cough or sneeze

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Clean and disinfect frequently

Call eCARE Senior Care at 605-322-4236 with any questions or concerns.

This is also a good time to remind staff and families how they can protect themselves against COVID-19. Per CDC this includes:

• Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.

• Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

• Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

• Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Finally, please see the CDC's guidelines for long-term care and skilled nursing facilities: **Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities**

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