

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | March 13, 2020

State health officials release recommendations for long-term care facilities

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is meeting this morning with long-term care providers to discuss details of a [memo](#) sent Thursday highlighting guidance for long-term care facilities to protect their residents from novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Those with higher risk include older adults and individuals who also have serious chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that the highest rate of illness and death is for those over the age of 80.

The American Health Care Association distributed [recommendations](#) on Monday that highlight steps that long-term care facilities should take to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The steps include:

1. Allowing entry only to individuals who need entry. Visitors should be limited to the immediate family members of those residents who are in critical condition or at end-of-life.
2. Restricting activities and visitors who increase the risk for exposure. This includes postponing visits from youth groups, volunteers, music groups, etc.
3. Actively screening individuals entering the building and restricting entry to those with respiratory symptoms or possible exposure to COVID-19.
4. Requiring all individuals entering the building to wash their hands at entry.
5. Setting up processes to allow remote communication for residents and others.

“These steps are necessary to keep our older citizens safe,” said State Health Officer Mylynn Tufte. “We understand it is difficult to be apart from your friends and family. Thank you for your help in protecting your loved ones from this serious and potentially life-threatening illness.”

The NDDoH is establishing a state program to assist all long-term care facilities to ensure infection control protocols are in place and these recommendations are being implemented.

For the most updated and timely information and updates related to COVID-19, visit the NDDoH website at www.health.nd.gov/coronavirus, follow them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

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