Recommended Guidance[1] for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in the Medically Fragile Child

I. **Planning Actions for the Home Health Care Agency during an infectious disease pandemic**

- Review your list of clients, and ensure that it is up to date, including levels of informal support available to individuals. Providers should consider how they could benefit from sharing client health information electronically with local partners (hospitals, local health departments, EMS providers), if they receive a legitimate request.
- Work with local agencies/facilities to establish plans for mutual aid, taking into account business continuity plans and considering arrangements to support sharing of the workforce between home care providers, local primary and community services, and with the deployment of volunteers, where that is safe to do so.
- Note the arrangements that local authorities are putting in place to refer vulnerable people self-isolating at home to volunteers who can offer practical and emotional support.
- Use telemedicine and other non-direct care services, when appropriate.
- Develop back up plans for continuation of care using alternate family, additional nursing support, or hospitalization as needed when the primary guardian is unable to care for the patient during hours when health care providers (HCPs) are not regularly scheduled.

II. **Preventative Actions for the introduction of respiratory germs INTO your home**

- Stay home as much as possible and consider alternate methods (friends or delivery of services) to get food, medications, and supplies to your home.
- Post signs outside the entrance restricting entry to anyone with symptoms of illness/respiratory infection.
- No outside visitors should be allowed in the home unless necessary (HCPs or maintenance/repair workers). For these persons, a log shall be maintained including date/time, name, phone number/cell number, and email.
- Anyone required to be in the home should be checked for fever before entering the home.
- Home health care agencies should screen HCPs for symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) at the start of shift and prior to dispatching to a client residence

  - If HCPs have signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, they should NOT work.
  - If HCPs do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but do have mild respiratory illnesses, they may work if they have been fever-free for 72 hours without medication and their symptoms are improving. While working, the employee must wear a facemask.

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[1] Source: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

- If HCPs develop signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection while on the job
- they should:
  ✓ Immediately stop work, put on a facemask, remove self from the client area, and self-isolate at home.
  ✓ Inform the agency supervisor.
  ✓ Contact the local health department for next steps

III. **Preventative Actions for the spread of respiratory germs WITHIN your home**

- Monitor the child daily for signs/symptoms of COVID-19.
- Promptly isolate anyone in the home with symptoms of COVID-19, including the use of a procedure mask (as tolerated by children). Clean/disinfect area after the ill person leaves.
- Monitor and enforce hand hygiene among residents of the home.
- Avoid shaking hands as a social greeting.
- Ensure anyone working with the medically fragile child cleans their hands according to CDC guidelines, including before and after contact with others, and after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment.
- Set up alternate hand washing supplies or place alcohol-based hand rub in every room.
- All home health staff should wear recommended PPE. In addition, the number of home health staff should be limited to essential personnel. Any supplies brought into, used, and removed from the home must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with environmental infection control guidelines.
- Teach and reinforce healthy hygiene as age appropriate (covering coughs/sneezes; disposing of tissues; hand washing; keep fingers away from eyes, nose and mouth) for all residents of the home.
- Make sure tissues are available and all sinks are well-stocked with soap and paper towels for hand washing.
- Position trash cans for easier discarding of tissues and paper towels for residents of the home and healthcare workers.
- Increase cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched items, including doorknobs, medical equipment, toys, phones, keyboards, mice, and other items identified as frequently handled.
  - More information can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html
- If HCPs undertake routine cleaning duties, they should use usual household products such as detergents and bleach, as these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces.
- •If a HCP is in a client's home and suspects COVID-19 infection among the client or a member of the household, they should follow the CDC guidance for PPE and safe working procedures to minimize the risk of transmission.
- If the individual being cared for and their HCP can remain at a safe protected distance from other members of the household that are symptomatic and isolating, then care can be provided without additional precautions. This would apply, for example, where the living arrangements will allow the symptomatic family member to remain in their own room, use a separate bathroom facility, and observe robust isolation procedures including staying 6 feet away from other family members. If this is not possible, then the same procedures should be adopted as if the client being cared for did have symptoms of COVID-19. Care should continue to be taken to limit contact with any household member that has symptoms.

- Coordinate with your physicians and local health department; inform them of COVID-19 cases reported that have had contact with the medically fragile child or anyone in the home.

IV. **Preventative Actions for Vulnerable Populations**

Social distancing actions are taken to restrict when and where people can gather to stop or slow the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or other infectious diseases in communities. Social distancing actions include limiting large groups of people coming together, closing buildings, or canceling events. Staff, parents/guardians, and children with medical conditions may wish to avoid a congregate setting such as a childcare or daycare center.

V. **Contingency Planning**

- Work with Home Health Agencies for "Just in Time Training" on medical equipment, treatment pathways, and emergency interventions.
- Work with Home Health agencies to determine what medical equipment can be cleaned and reused in case there is difficulty getting supplies.
- Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand in case there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community and you need to stay home for a prolonged period.
    - If you cannot leave the home to obtain extra medications, consider other options (pharmacy delivery or using mail-order for medications).
- Be sure you have over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and medical supplies (tissues, oral syringes, humidifiers, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.
- Have enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for a period of time.
- You can make a do it yourself (DIY) hand sanitizer at home using over the counter (OTC) ingredients potentially still available. Mix isopropyl or rubbing alcohol (99% alcohol volume) with aloe vera gel to make a gel that keeps the alcohol content close to 60% (recommended concentration). Maintaining a 2:1 proportion of alcohol to gel will assure the recommended alcohol percentage. A few drops of essential oil or lemon juice can be added for scent. This can be poured into any pump-equipped bottle such as a gel dispenser. The bottle should be labelled to make sure it is not misidentified. NOTE: This is not a substitute for hand washing. There should be a warning that this is kept away from children and not ingested.

VI. **Resources**
CDC What to do if you are sick
CDC When and How to Wash Your Hands
CDC People At-risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19
CDC Print Resources