



ALASKA STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local 52

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

House Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol Rm 106
Juneau, AK, 99801

October 20, 2020

Dear Committee Members:

With COVID-19 cases rising and outbreaks in a number of our state's 24-hour facilities, I wanted to make sure your committee is aware of the guidance and recommendations from our health and safety expert, Keith Wrightson, with AFSCME (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees). In the absence of state and federal regulations to protect workers, we urge/implore you to require that facilities with active outbreaks implement the following controls to slow and stop the spread of COVID-19 facilities:

- 1) Sanitize facilities that have had an outbreak immediately. Use EPA registered disinfectants or UV-C light sanitizing system.
- 2) Cease all outside contacts in 24-hour facilities. This includes any outside visitors including deliveries. Necessary deliveries, including food services, should be controlled and minimized as much as possible. Mail should be picked up versus allowing mail persons from entering the facilities.
- 3) Isolate areas with active COVID-19 cases and put up proper signage (e.g., ACTIVE AIRBORN COVID-19 AREA – REQUIRED PERSONNEL ONLY - PROPER SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIRED)
- 4) Require proper, high-level PPE in areas where there is active COVID-19
- 5) The incubation period for the virus is generally 2 days and most show symptoms by day 5 of infection. Ensure that all staff and residents are tested and quarantined. Test on days 3 and 5, twice a week, every week, as long as there is an active case or outbreak.
- 6) Conduct temperature checks and implement COVID-19 screening questions (see attached document as an example) to inquire about exposure and symptoms. These checks should be conducted by personnel that are qualified and/or have been properly trained to handle medical information and record thermometer data. Checks and screens should occur whenever someone leaves and returns to the facility (including leaving for a lunch break and at the start of each workday).
- 7) Alternative accommodations and per diem should be arranged for staff in order to reduce their outside exposure and/or spreading of COVID-19 outside the facility.
- 8) All staff working in facilities with active outbreaks should be offered time-and-a-half pay to accommodate them for the increased risk to health and safety. Offering additional pay may help reduce employee exposure and spread of COVID-19 if they are working in multiple facilities.

Many of these steps are simple and follow common sense guidance for controlling the dangerous spread of COVID-19. We know COVID-19 can live on surfaces and spread through the air. In order to control the spread of the virus, we must control exposure through sanitation and isolate areas with active cases including its spread in the air. Proper filtration may be a higher bar but must be addressed to make sure that the current outbreaks don't continue to increase. We will not be able to control this virus at all if our state employees become ill due to poor management and mitigation.

Sincerely,

Jake Metcalfe
Executive Director
ASEA/AFSCME Local 52

