

Outbreak Response Plan - COVID-19

Policy Statement

Lincoln Park Health Care's Outbreak Response Plan is based upon CDC and NJDOH guidance and was developed in conjunction with Administration, Infection Control Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee.

Outbreaks of COVID-19 within the facility will be promptly identified and appropriately handled.

Lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic

1. The proper use of PPE is most effective way to protect our residents, family members, and staff.
 - a. Obtaining PPE from multiple sources was required to ensure a sufficient supply.
2. The use of technology and electronic devices became a critical part of keeping families and residents in touch with each other.
 - a. The facility had to work quickly to obtain a sufficient number of electronic devices to keep all family members and residents in touch that requested it.
3. Creativity was required to ensure that all residents and family members were able to communicate, visit and support one another.
 - a. The facility utilized ancillary staff members to assist with outdoor visits, window visits and other means of visitation.
 - b. The facility purchased enclosed areas, equipment and décor to ensure that visitation for residents and families was meaningful.
4. Screening and monitoring resident, staff and visitors became crucial to mitigating the spread of COVID-19.
5. Implementing isolation and proper cohorting procedures was imperative.
6. Continuous training and education assisted in reducing the spread of the disease and the proper use of PPE and hand hygiene.
7. Communication with staff, family and staff members was needed. Multiple methods of communication had to be implemented.

Definitions

- **Outbreak**-any unusual occurrence of disease or any diseases above background or endemic levels
- **Cohorting**-the practice of grouping residents who are or are not colonized or infected with the same organism to confine their care to one area and prevent contact with other residents.
- **Isolating**- the process of separating sick or contagious persons from those who are not sick.
- **Endemic**- the usual level of given disease in a geographic area.
- **Pandemic**- a sudden infectious disease outbreak that becomes very widespread and affects a whole region, continent, or the world due to susceptible population. By definition, a true pandemic causes a high degree of mortality.

Policy, Interpretation and Implementation

Outbreaks of communicable diseases at Lincoln Park HealthCare will be identified promptly and interventions will be executed accordingly to decrease the risk of spread to residents, staff and visitors.

As required by the New Jersey Department of Health N.J.S.A.26:2H-12:87, the outbreak response plan is written to fit the needs of Lincoln Park Healthcare. The plan had implemented national standards and was developed in conjunction with the QAPI team and Infectious Disease Physician.

The Outbreak plan includes:

1. The protocol for isolating and cohorting infected and exposed residents in the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease until the outbreak is deemed concluded by the NJDOH and the Local Department of Health.
2. The policy for notification of residents, family members and staff when an outbreak is identified, and additional cases of a communicable disease are identified.
3. Information regarding testing availability both in-house and via contracted laboratory. Protocols for screening of any persons entering the facility that are ill and the protocol for excluding entering and testing.
4. The policy for routine testing of residents and staff to identify additional cases of a communicable disease during an outbreak.
5. The protocol for reporting an outbreak to necessary public health officials.

Isolation and Cohorting

- Residents with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection will be placed in a single-person room when available or in a double-bedded room with a resident with the same respiratory pathogen. The door should be kept closed (if safe to do so) if resident is not placed on a unit dedicated to only residents with the same pathogen. The resident will use only a bathroom dedicated to residents that have the same pathogen, if a private bathroom is not available.
 - If cohorting, only patients with the same respiratory pathogen should be housed in the same room. MDRO colonization status and/or presence of other communicable disease should also be taken into consideration during the cohorting process.
- Lincoln Park Healthcare will designate entire units within the facility, if practical, with dedicated HCP, to care for patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection when the number of patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection is high. Dedicated means that HCP are assigned to care only for these patients during their shifts. Dedicated units and/or HCP might not be feasible due to staffing crises or a small number of patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- Limit transport and movement of the patient outside of the room to medically essential purposes.
- Communicate information about patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection to appropriate personnel before transferring them to other departments in the facility and to other healthcare facilities.
- All residents newly admitted, re-admitted or returning from out on pass who are not fully vaccinated will be placed on isolation for 14 days and monitored every shift for symptoms of COVID-19.

Notification

- Lincoln Park Healthcare will notify family members, guests and visitors of outbreaks and new cases via “Family Letter” using the email blast system. Email addresses have been obtained from at least one family member for each resident. Any family member without email access will receive a phone call to determine if they would like a copy of the “family letter” mailed or left for them at the facility.
- Residents of the facility (If alert and oriented) will receive a paper copy of the letter via hand delivery to each resident room.

- Staff, volunteers and students will receive notification using text blasts through our staffing and attendance system.
- Information relayed will include if actions to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission will need to be altered outside of the normal operations of the facility.
- Personal information including names, room numbers or identifying employee positions will not be shared.

Testing and Screening

- Lincoln Park Healthcare has contracted with Aculabs Laboratories for all testing needs for residents and staff members.
- Lincoln Park Healthcare has a CLIA license and has the supplies and availability to perform Point of care Antigen testing for COVID-19 for residents and staff.
- During an outbreak, all residents will be tested twice per week using POC testing, or if symptoms present, residents that have tested positive for COVID-19 within 30 days will be excluded from testing.
- When the facility is not in an outbreak residents will be tested if symptoms are present, resident has a known exposure and/or if they are unvaccinated and have returned from being out of the facility. Residents that are unvaccinated and leave the facility will be tested twice per week for 14 days.
- Residents that refuse to be tested will be treated as PUI.
- During an outbreak, Staff members will be tested weekly (If fully vaccinated and boosted) or if symptoms present. Vaccine exempt employees or employees who have not completed their primary series or boosters (due to eligibility) will be tested twice per week. Employees that have tested positive within 30 days for COVID-19 will be excluded from testing.
- Weekly testing is dependent on the most current Regional CALI (COVID-19 Activity Level Report) and will be adjusted to reflect more frequent testing when the score indicates.
- When the facility is not in an outbreak staff members will be tested if symptoms are present. Facility may test employees randomly. Vaccine exempt employees or employees who have not completed their primary series or boosters (due to eligibility) will test twice per week.
- Employees that refuse to be tested will be excluded from work.
- Staff will self-screen upon entry to the building at the self-screening kiosks daily.
- Staff members will report any exposure to nursing supervisor.
- Any staff member that is prompted not to enter the building after screening will exit the building and call a nursing supervisor to be screened and/or tested prior to returning and to determine if employee will be excluded from work.
- Visitors will self-screen prior to entering the facility and will be permitted into the facility after screening by the receptionist if they are permitted to do so after screening is complete.
- Visitors are encouraged to receive a POC test free of charge prior to entering the building.
- Visitors who are flagged on the screening kiosk will be screened by a nursing supervisor to determine if they will be excluded from entering.
- Residents that are exposed or have symptoms of COVID-19 will be placed on isolation and will be screened for symptoms every shift.

Reporting of Outbreaks and Cases of Communicable Diseases

- In the event of an outbreak, the facility will promptly report to and consult with the Local and state Health Departments for further instruction.
- The Director of Nursing will notify the appropriate public health officials.

- Family members, visitors, residents and staff members will receive notification of outbreak and the actions to be taken, at the advice of the Local and State health department.
- The Director of Nursing will complete the Resident and Staff line lists and complete the daily Department of Health Novisurvey and submit as directed.
- The Director will report to the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) as directed.
- The Director will report to the New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) as directed.

Preparedness for Communicable Disease Outbreak

Lincoln Park Healthcare has implemented an Outbreak plan to ensure preparedness and best workplace practices while integrating our lessons learned from the initial pandemic response in 2020. All Infection Control and prevention policies of Lincoln Park Healthcare have been reviewed while preparing the Outbreak Response Plan and policies have been incorporated.

PPE and other supplies

- Lincoln Park Healthcare will maintain a supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including Surgical Masks, Disposable N95s, face shields, eye protection and gloves. The facility will maintain a sufficient supply for residents, staff and visitors for a time period of 8 weeks.
- The facility has purchased cases of washable isolation gowns and has initiated a policy, in the event that isolation gowns become difficult to obtain as seen in 2020.
- The facility will maintain a sufficient supply of essential cleaning and disinfectant products.
- The facility will maintain a sufficient supply of disposable utensils, plates, cups and bowls for the dietary department.
- The facility has contracted with vendors to ensure a supply of food, beverages, medications, sanitizing agents and PPE is available in the event of a disruption in regular deliveries during an outbreak.
- The facility has a back up supply of disposable and equipment that is able to be sanitized for staff to maintain infection control practices when obtaining resident Vitals signs when there is an increased number of caes.

Visitors Restrictions

- Lincoln Park Healthcare will monitor guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health pertaining to changes in restrictions to visitors.
- Alternate means of visitation have been implemented in the event that visitation becomes restricted. (Ie: Virtual visits, window visits, outdoor visits in enclosed areas to ensure outdoor visitation when weather does not permit).
- Visits for end of life, compassionate and essential care giver visits will be permitted per NJDOH and Local Health Department guidelines.
- Visitors are permitted to enter during an outbreak and are permitted to visit residents that are on isolation for exposure or an active infection, but are required to consent that they are aware of the risks of becoming infected with COVID-19.

Staffing Plan

In the event of a staffing shortage due to employees being unable to work or unable to return to work because of a COVID-19 infection or other Pandemic/Endemic related illness, Lincoln Park Healthcare has secured alternated means of staffing:

- Overtime shifts will be offered to Lincoln Park Healthcare staff
- Shifts will be offered to Agency staff. Contracts have been signed with four Nursing Agencies.
- Per Diem staff will be offered Full time shifts.
- Ancillary nursing staff will be utilized to fill shifts on units (MDS, Restorative aides, Nursing Supervisors, Assistant Directors of Nursing, Director of Nursing and any

other licenses Nurses or Certified Nursing Assistants that currently do not hold direct care positions)

- The facility recruiter will assist in efforts to hire and fast track the hiring, orientation and education process.
- Remove tasks from the nursing department that do not need to be completed by licensed personnel (filling water, answering call bell, passing out pre-labeled snacks, etc) and assign to ancillary staff members.
- Assign therapy personnel to assist with Activities of Daily living (ADL's) and rendering care.
- Crisis staffing numbers to be reported to the NHDOH and allow staff to return in accordance with the : CD Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages.
- Notify the NJDOH if still unable to obtain sufficient staff to request assistance.

Increased Sanitizing

- Environmental Services will increase cleaning schedules and the number of staff within the facility, if required.
- High touch areas will have increased cleaning.
- Rehabilitation Department will increase cleaning of equipment
- Education to staff will be increased on Methods to prevent spread during a Pandemic/Endemic

Source Control

- Lincoln Park Healthcare practices universal masking for all staff and visitors. Staff is required to practice universal Source Control using an N95 when the facility is in an outbreak and has active cases of COVID-19.
- Visitors are educated to maintain a 6 ft distance from residents other than the residents they are visiting.
- Visitors are encourage to perform hand hygiene upon entering the facility, while in the facility and prior to leaving.
- Residents are encouraged to wear surgical masks when not in their rooms during an active outbreak.

The facility will monitor Transmission rates while in the facility and adjust protocols within the facility as needed.

Dining, Activities and Rehabilitation

- In the event of widespread identified cases on one area, testing will be adjusted to identify cases as quickly as possible. Communal dining, communal activities and rehab may be temporarily suspended in the affected area while the facility works to reduce the spread of transmission.

Policy Revised	Date: <u>11/2/2022</u>	By: <u>David Gross</u>
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