



## COVID19 Hot Topics for Independent Living:

### What Happens When We Have a Confirmed COVID 19 Case?

Life Plan Communities, along with other non-regulated aging services providers, are beginning to face the challenges inherent in the discovery of a confirmed case of COVID 19 in their community. Providers must be prepared to communicate with many important stakeholders, while preserving confidentiality and continuing forward with daily operations.

LeadingAge offers the following “Hot Topic” on what happens when an LPC or similar provider discovers a confirmed case of COVID 19 in their community, drawing on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), as well as best practices in the field.

#### How LPCs and Similar Providers are Preparing and Responding to a Confirmed COVID19 Case:

##### 1. How Are Members Preparing for a Confirmed COVID 19 Case? :

- **Communication & Education:** Communicating “early and often” is the approach that many LPCs have practiced for several weeks. Establishing templates with a regular tone and frequency has already served our members well, and helps build trust with residents, families and staff.
- **Modified Services:** As referenced in earlier Hot Topics, many LPCs have already modified various services to encourage social distancing and staying at home. LPCs who already have these modifications in place are well-prepared, should the community need to be quarantined upon the discovery of a confirmed COVID 19 case.
- **Regular Connection with Agencies and State Executives:** In advance, many LPCs have reached out to local agencies, state departments of health, and their LeadingAge State Executives for support, guidance and communication. These connections later pave the way for efficient dialogue and response when a COVID 19 diagnosis emerges.

##### 2. How Are Members Responding to a Confirmed COVID 19 Case? :

- **Notification:** As per CDC guidelines, LPCs are notifying the CDC and/ or their state departments of health when a confirmed case of COVID19 emerges – whether that case involves a resident or state member.
- **Internal Communication:** Following the directives of the CDC and/or their state departments of health, LPCs have then prepared an internal disclosure to key stakeholders (residents, families, staff members) to alert the community that there is a confirmed case of COVID 19.
- **Public Relations:** Working together with either a public relations firm, the state LeadingAge office, or other internal resources, LPCs with confirmed cases have then established clear, succinct and targeted messaging for press releases, press conferences and the news media.
  - **Point of Reference:** LeadingAge has prepared a number of online resources, based on member experiences and best practices. You can find them under the “Directing the Coronavirus Conversation” tile on the [www.leadingage.org/covid19](http://www.leadingage.org/covid19) website.
  - **Your State Executives:** Some members who have already experienced confirmed COVID19 cases on their campuses have reached out to their LeadingAge State Executives for essential support and guidance. We encourage

all members to connect with their State Executives when a confirmed case arises, to optimize the support you can receive from LeadingAge.

- **External Communication:** Once the internal stakeholders have been notified, and a PR strategy developed, LPCs have then issued their public disclosures to all stakeholder groups, including community leaders, vendors, business partners, and the news media.
  - **Under Quarantine:** Once a confirmed COVID19 case has been announced, and the state department of health/ CC is involved, many LPCs have had to go under a community-wide resident quarantine. The epidemiologists involved have tracked the chain of the possible spread of the virus, and often, staff members who are identified as possibly infected are required to self-quarantine at home. Your state department of health officials, or CDC officials, will be in charge of this process and will stipulate the specifics of any quarantine, testing requirements, and timelines for lifting restrictions.
    - **Staff Self-Quarantine Compensation:** LPCs are deciding how to address compensation for any staff who must be self-quarantined at home. Some are allowing for compensation under the expanded FMLA provisions for COVID19; others offer extensions of Paid Time Off or Sick Leave.
3. **How are Members Recovering from a Confirmed COVID 19 Case?** As yet, most LPC members are in the Preparation or Response phases of responding to a confirmed case of COVID 19. This section will be expanded as experiences from the field are shared. As per above, LPCs with confirmed COVID19 cases are dependent on state department of health and/or CDC officials to determine when quarantine or other restrictions may be lifted.

As the coronavirus pandemic and response continues to evolve, new and updated resources for all aging services providers will be posted to [www.leadingage.org/COVID19](http://www.leadingage.org/COVID19). Please visit frequently to get the latest news and updates.