

April 2, 2020

The spread of COVID-19 has put immense pressure on Colorado's health care system, especially the state's hospitals and long-term care facilities. While anyone can contract COVID-19, the most at-risk populations continue to be the elderly and individuals with compromised immune systems—many of whom live in Colorado's long-term care facilities.

The high volume of elderly patients and those needing additional care has made standard discharges from hospitals to long-term care facilities critical in slowing the spread of COVID-19 and limiting the number of fatalities. Unfortunately, limitations on the supply of tests and delays in getting test results have meant many Coloradans who could be discharged to long-term care facilities under normal circumstances remain in hospital beds that are desperately needed to care for other critically ill patients.

In the absence of available and timely testing, hospitals must be able to continue discharging patients who no longer need hospital-level care, and Colorado's long-term care facilities must be confident that the residents they are bringing into their facilities will not present a risk to others. The ability to solidify this discharge process will be vitally important in the weeks and months to come, as capacity at Colorado hospitals and health systems becomes a crucial issue to managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, Colorado Hospital Association, Colorado Health Care Association, LeadingAge Colorado and CMDA The Colorado Society of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine are jointly releasing the following form for use when discharging hospital inpatients to Colorado long-term care facilities. We are also sharing guidance from the American Health Care Association related to nursing homes accepting hospital transfers during the COVID-19 pandemic in hopes of developing a common understanding of responsible transfers.

As we work to address this public health crisis, Colorado should rest assured that Colorado's hospitals and long-term care facilities are working collaboratively as one health care system with one steadfast goal: providing the highest quality health care and saving lives.