



March 19, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nursing Homes

FROM: Gwen C. Thompson,
Director of Healthcare Quality

SUBJECT: Patient Tuberculosis Screening

On March 13, 2020, Governor Henry McMaster issued Executive Order No. 2020-08, declaring a State of Emergency based on a determination that the 2019 Novel Coronavirus ("COVID-19") poses an actual or imminent public health emergency for the State of South Carolina. Additionally, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency, which began on March 1, 2020.

On March 17, 2020, Governor McMaster issued Executive Order No. 2020-10, reasserting that COVID-19 represents an evolving public health threat, which requires that the State of South Carolina continue to take all necessary and appropriate actions in proactively preparing for and promptly responding to the threat posed by COVID-19.

Enabling efficient, seamless transition of patients from hospitals to nursing homes will help ensure access to necessary services. Pursuant to Section 203 of Regulation 61-17, Standards for Licensing Nursing Homes, the Department hereby waives Section 1704 for patient admissions to nursing homes from hospitals during the COVID-19 State of Emergency if the nursing home complies with one of the following alternatives:

1. Prior to admission, the nursing home has a written declaration from an authorized healthcare provider, based upon medical examination, that the patient has no signs or symptoms of active tuberculosis. The nursing home shall then administer the first step of the two-step tuberculin skin test to the patient within three (3) days of admission to the nursing home, and the second step within fourteen (14) days of admission. The nursing home may substitute a single Blood Assay for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (BAMT) for a two-step tuberculin skin test;
or
2. Prior to admission, if the nursing home has documentation of a negative tuberculin skin test or a BAMT result for the patient within the previous twelve (12) months, then the nursing home shall administer a single tuberculin skin test or a single BAMT to the patient within fourteen (14) days of admission to serve as the baseline.

The Department may rescind this memorandum at its discretion.