

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members
FROM: Stephanie Hayden, Director, Austin Public Health 
DATE: July 21, 2020
SUBJECT: **Staff Update to Resolution No. 20200507-059**

On May 7, 2020, Council passed Resolution No. **20200507-059** directing the City Manager to plan and collaborate with outside entities, develop, fund, and implement programs, and report status updates to Council regarding efforts to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among the residents and staff of nursing homes and other long term care facilities, and other vulnerable persons.

This memo provides a summary of actions taken in response to this resolution since the last memo provided to Mayor and Council on May 21st, 2020. Additionally, staff is providing regular updates to Mayor and Council at Council Work Sessions and Special Called briefings.

Since the last [memo](#) on May 21, 2020, the following additional activities have been completed in response to this resolution:

Testing

After completion of the initial round of testing at all (32) nursing homes in Travis County, testing assistance was offered to all long-term care facilities (LTCs).

- Since the end of mandated testing, APH has processed 26 additional LTC facility testing requests.
- Additionally, APH is now assisting other facilities with their testing needs. Examples include social service agencies and State facilities.
- From May 1 – July 10, APH has coordinated 7,448 COVID tests in a facility setting.
- On July 13, 2020 staff were notified the state of Texas will provide testing at the long-term care facilities. They will use the CVS Omni team to complete testing.
- On July 16, 2020, Federal Health and Human Services will provide The ID Now COVID-19 testing and equipment to long-term care facilities across the nation. Priority will be provided to areas with the highest impact. Staff has reached out to the state level to inquire about the test kit distribution.
- Until the efforts are deployed staff will adhere to the testing plan long-term care facilities.

Strike Teams

Due to continued spread of COVID-19 in long term care facilities, need for staffing support has continued. This need has been addressed through provision of strike teams composed of RNs, LVNs, CNAs and EMTs. The Long -Term Care Incident Management Team (IMT) has taken the lead on this effort.

- Since May 21, strike teams have been deployed to an additional 7 facilities (total= 14 facilities). The IMT plans to train and deploy strike teams to 2 additional facilities the week of July 13.



- Since May 21, 40 additional agency staff have completed a half-day LTC strike team orientation (total= 90)
- Since May 21, 50 additional agency staff have been fit tested on N-95 masks (total=130)
- The IMT continues to monitor the need for additional strike teams at long term care facilities on an ongoing basis.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Provision

All LTC facilities have a standard process to order their own PPE. The IMT has provided additional PPE supplies to supplement as follows:

- All LTC facilities (over 100 facilities) were offered a onetime supplemental “PPE push-pack” to be prepared in case of an outbreak at their facility. 35 ALs and all 32 NHs accepted and received this push pack.
- Weekly PPE has been provided to facilities with large outbreaks who are unable to support their own PPE needs. The IMT coordinated weekly PPE distribution to a total 12 facilities.

Training and Guidance

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has taken the lead on issuing training and guidance for infection control and prevention at LTC facilities. APH continues to provide supplemental guidance and training as needed.

- The IMT leads weekly calls to coordinate information sharing between APH and the facilities. These meetings consistently have over 50 attendees.
- Since May 21, the IMT has provided 9 additional trainings for 299 LTC facility staff. Training topics include: N-95 fit test training of trainers, infection control for housekeeping staff, and on-site PPE and Hand Hygiene training.

Isolation Facilities

- One isolation facility has been serving central Texas LTC facilities since the March and has not yet reached capacity. The IMT has previously supported staffing and PPE needs for this facility but it is now self-sustaining.
- The IMT is currently working to secure two additional isolation facilities to serve central Texas. Potential locations have been identified and are under review.
- The IMT is developing a list of LTC facilities that have a current COVID isolation unit and are willing to accept COVID positive residents from other facilities.

Staff Retention and Hiring Incentive Programs

- The IMT has solicited feedback from LTC facilities on their current practices related to retention and hiring incentives and provided this information to Economic Development Department for consideration in the development of a staff retention and hiring incentive program.

System Improvements

- APH and the IMT continue to collaborate with the Dell Medical School Design Institute for Health to identify approaches for system improvements to protect residents and reduce the risks of the spread of COVID-19 in LTC facilities. The final report will be sent to Mayor and Council.





Staff will continue to work on this effort until further notice. All updates will be provided during the council briefing and special called meetings. We consider this resolution complete. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me for more information.

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Deputy City Manager
Christopher Shorter, Assistant City Manager

