**MDH Updates to COVID-19 Data Posting: Sample Talking Points and Messages *Updated: December 15, 2020***

**Background**

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will soon begin posting new data about the impact of COVID-19 on nursing homes and assisted living settings.

MDH will list on its website ([Situation Update for COVID-19](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html)) all nursing homes and assisted living settings that have had an exposure to COVID-19, showing cumulative totals for the number of cases in staff, residents and the number of deaths in residents since the pandemic began. MDH will update the information weekly; however, providers that have had an exposure will not come off the list with the passage of time. To preserve privacy, MDH will not include settings with 10 or fewer residents.

**Action Steps**

We recommend that providers compile cumulative data since the beginning of the pandemic for the number of cases in staff, residents, and visiting service providers, as well as the number of resident deaths that have occurred, sorted by week or month. Having this data readily available will allow you to address questions if you receive them and verify the accuracy of MDH information when it is posted.

We also suggest providers prepare messages to share with residents, families, community members, prospective employees, prospective residents/tenants/clients, media, or other stakeholders – either proactively or in response to questions you may receive. What follows are some examples that providers can use and adapt to fit your individual circumstances and experiences with COVID-19.

For assistance, please contact Libbie Chapuran, Director of Communications, at 651-659-1443 or lchapuran@leadingagemn.org.

**Sample Messages**

*Adapt the following talking points to fit the situation in your setting.*

* {Organization name} strongly supports of transparency regarding the impact of COVID-19 on our residents and staff, and we have been notifying families and {residents /tenants/clients} on a consistent basis about COVID-19 cases in our setting since the beginning of the pandemic.
* We regularly post information on our website [insert link] about the status of COVID-19 in our setting. {Provide detail about what information is available; if you are already posting cumulative data similar to what MDH is posting, indicate that here.}
* Information available on the Minnesota Department of Health’s website shows the cumulative total of cases from early 2020 until now. The number of COVID cases we have experienced has fluctuated throughout the year, and the cumulative total does not represent the current COVID-19 situation in our setting, or the additional resources, protocols and protections, such as testing, that are available to aging services providers today compared to the early stages of the pandemic. {If you are already posting cumulative data similar to what MDH is posting, omit this item.}
* We are implementing comprehensive infection control measures to protect our {residents /tenants/clients} and staff, based on recommended COVID-19 guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services {omit the reference to CMS if you are not a nursing facility}.
* In order to protect those who live in our community, we conduct regular COVID-19 testing of our staff, and the cases we identify through that proactive process are reflected in the information we share with our {residents /tenants/clients} and their families.
* The majority of healthcare worker exposures to COVID-19 have not occurred within healthcare and long-term care facilities, but rather outside the workplace, as the virus has spread broadly across our community. Our policies and procedures, including use of personal protective equipment and regular testing, are designed to protect our caregivers while they are at work and the people they serve.
* {Include additional detail and perspective applicable to your unique facility and situation, if appropriate, such as: in order to meet the needs of our community, we have established a specialized, dedicated unit to serve individuals who are recovering from COVID-19, and we have admitted some individuals from a hospital or other facility who were previously diagnosed with COVID-19. These cases are included in our data.}