



Cambridge  
Public Health  
Department

To: Cambridge Skilled Nursing Facilities  
Cambridge Assisted Living Facilities

From: Assaad J. Sayah, MD, Commissioner of Public Health  
Claude A. Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer

Date: April 9, 2020

Re: **Rapid Pilot for COVID-19 Surveillance Testing of Cambridge Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities**

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most challenging public health events of our time. Given the extreme risk to the elderly and those with underlying health conditions, your facilities are on the front line of this battle. The Cambridge Public Health Department ("CPHD") is pleased to have been presented with the opportunity to participate in a pilot project to assist your facilities, patients, and staff during this challenging time.

*The Rapid Pilot for COVID-19 Surveillance Testing of Cambridge Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities* is a comprehensive project to conduct gold standard COVID-19 surveillance testing of every patient, resident, and staff member of your facility on a continuing basis at no cost to your facility. This project is being launched by the Cambridge Public Health Department with the amazing support of the Broad Institute and ProEMS Ambulance Service. This project will provide surveillance level COVID-19 testing without regard to whether individuals have symptoms. This COVID-19 surveillance testing will provide your facilities with timely information and COVID-19 status that you are currently unable to obtain due to the limited amount of available COVID-19 testing kits. Having early information on all patients, residents, and staff regarding COVID-19 infection status will allow you to better prepare and protect your residents and staff.

The risk of COVID-19 to your staff and residents is clear. The need to protect our most vulnerable is a public health priority and the duty of each and every one of us. COVID-19 surveillance testing at this critical time is a tremendous opportunity that we will all be able to take advantage of as participants in this pilot project.

We expect that your facilities are following Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) guidelines and/or available best practices for your setting. If any individuals in your facility are found to test positive for COVID-19, we expect you to adhere to the same clinical protocols and guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as MDPH that you currently adhere to. If you are having difficulty complying with these requirements, please let us know. We recognize the great strains that your facility and staff are under at this very intense time. The Cambridge Public Health Department will assist your facilities in every way that we can.

CPHD staff will be in touch with the leadership of each facility to coordinate this important project. We look forward to working with you and your staff in this great collaborative effort to protect our most vulnerable.

