

Methodology

The Nursing Home COVID-19 Public File includes data reported by nursing homes to the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) Long Term Care Facility (LTCF) COVID-19 Module: Surveillance Reporting Pathways and COVID-19 Vaccinations.

For a full list of variables included in this Public Use File (PUF) and their descriptions, please see the data dictionary. The file contains an individual record for each certified Medicare skilled nursing facility/Medicaid nursing facility and the ending date for each collection week, and is updated weekly. More information on CMS requirements for reporting COVID-19 information can be found in the [Requirements for Notification of Confirmed Cases memorandum](#) and the [Vaccination Immunization Requirements memorandum](#). We note that the presence of cases of COVID-19 in a nursing home does not automatically indicate noncompliance with federal requirements. This information is used to assist with national surveillance of COVID-19 in nursing homes, and support actions to protect the health and safety of nursing home residents.

NOTE: There are several limitations to this data:

- The first deadline for reporting data was 11:59 p.m. Sunday, May 17, 2020. Since facilities may correct data for previous weeks, the data is subject to fluctuations as data for previously-reported weeks may change when the website is updated.
- The availability of testing may impact the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases facilities report. For example, facilities that did not have the ability to test all residents a few weeks ago would not be able to report all residents with confirmed cases. Similarly, access to testing can vary by state, region, or facility.
- Facilities may opt to report cumulative data retrospectively back to January 1, 2020. Therefore, some facilities may be reporting higher numbers of cases/deaths compared to other facilities, due to their retrospective reporting. Numbers for Week Ending 05/24/2020 may include reporting for any time between 01/01/2020 through 05/24/2020. Reporting for subsequent weeks is on a weekly basis.
- Data Quality Assurance (QA) and Validation (QA Flags): Data quality checks are performed to identify instances where facilities may have entered incorrect data, such as entering cumulative counts over time instead of new cases, and other data entry errors. In these cases, we will display facilities as having submitted data, but will not include their data in our dataset or analyses to preserve the accuracy of the data presented. Facilities that have submitted erroneous data will have an "N" displayed in the column titled "Passed Quality Assurance Check."
- Beginning with 01/24/2021 data file, CMS implemented changes to its Quality Assurance (QA) methodology to more accurately identify facilities who have entered erroneous data and reduce the number of facilities flagged who have input correct data. Updating the QA criteria has allowed some facilities whose data has been previously suppressed to now be publicly posted. As a result, stakeholders may notice an increase in cumulative COVID-19 resident and staff cases and deaths. However, the increases are nominal and do not significantly impact the overall observed trend of COVID-19 cases and deaths.

Due to these factors, CMS cautions users to consider these factors when performing any analysis. For example, data reported over data reported for the week ending 05/24/2020 should not be used to

perform trend analysis and longitudinal analyses.

We also note that CMS has authority over Medicare/Medicaid Certified Long Term Care facilities (also known as nursing homes) and does not oversee other types of senior living centers, such as assisted living communities. Therefore, only data for nursing homes is posted. Lastly, states or localities within states have been publishing COVID-19 data about individuals in their communities. Due to different reporting requirements, timelines, and other factors, the data presented here may be inconsistent with data reported by a state.