

# COVID-19 Community Transmission & Nursing Home Screening Strategies

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**AHRQ ECHO National Nursing  
Home COVID-19 Action Network**



# Today's Speaker



**Jennifer Kim, DNP, GNP-BC, GS-C**

Professor, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing

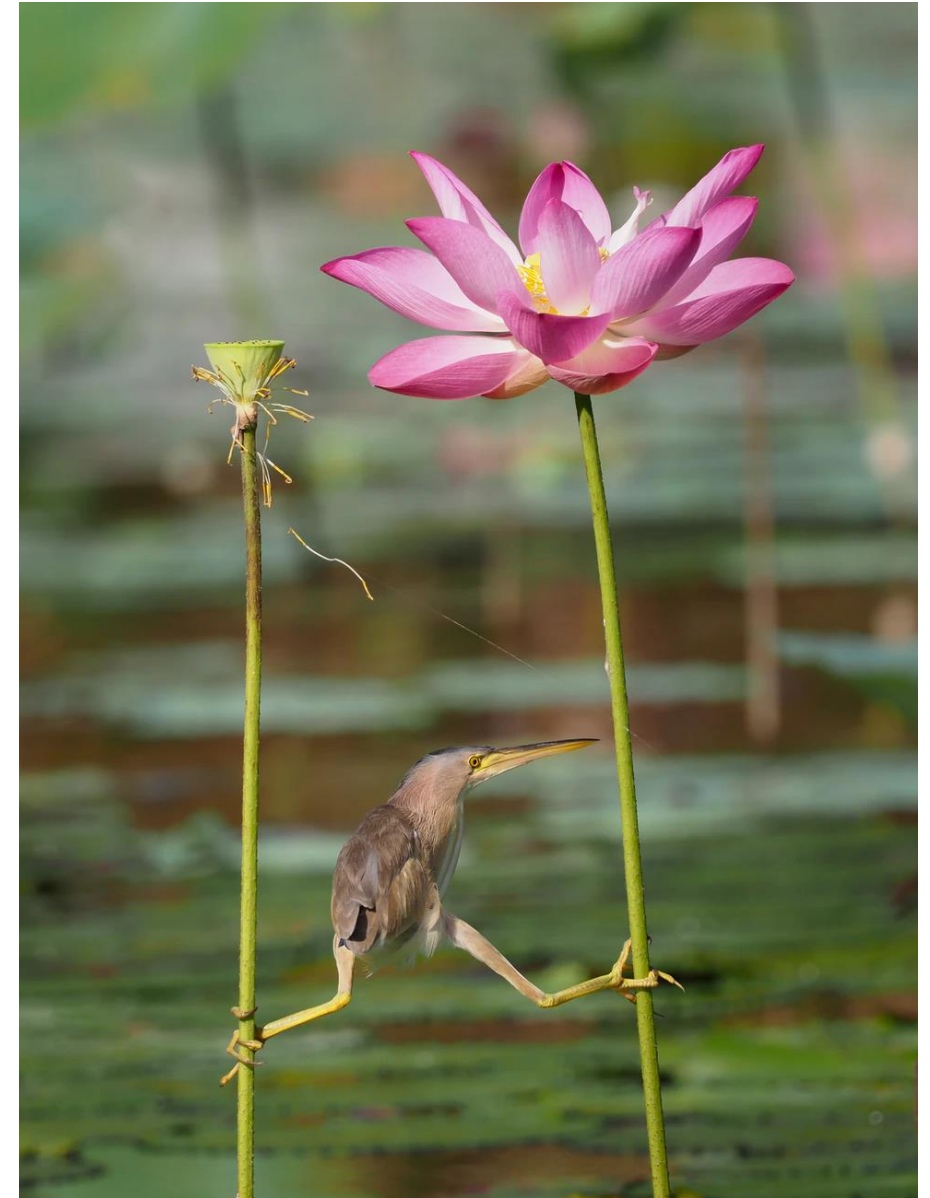
Treasurer, Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA)

# Learning Objectives

- Develop one method of disseminating up-to-date information on COVID-19 community activity to staff members.
- Identify challenges related to COVID-19 fatigue in staff members.
- Discuss relationship between COVID-19 community activity and screening practices within the nursing home.

# A Balancing Act

- CMS guidelines
- CDC guidelines
- State guidelines
- Innovative strategies
- Stewardship of resources



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## Toolkit on State Actions to Mitigate COVID-19 Prevalence in Nursing Homes

November 2020 Version 13

Including recent information and guidance on vaccinations to prevent infection with influenza virus, pneumococcus, and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19



# CMS Toolkit

- November 5, 2020
- State level guidance for COVID-19 management & response
  - Screening guidance
  - Visitation recommendations & guidelines
- Check CMS website often for updates





# Community Outbreaks & The Nursing Home



<https://unsplash.com/photos/9IRgAVxBr-I>

# Lack of consistent mask use and social distancing at a wedding reception in rural Maine led to multiple COVID-19 outbreaks and deaths



## Slow the spread of COVID-19

- ✓ avoid large gatherings
- ✓ stay home when sick
- ✓ wear masks
- ✓ stay 6 feet from others

CDC.GOV

[bit.ly/MMWR111220](https://bit.ly/MMWR111220)

MMWR

# Community Transmission- CDC Definitions

- **No-to-minimal community transmission:** Evidence of isolated cases or limited community transmission; case investigations under way; no evidence of exposure in large communal setting.
- **Minimal-to-moderate community transmission:** Sustained transmission with high likelihood or confirmed exposure within communal settings and potential for rapid increase in cases.
- **Substantial community transmission:** Large-scale community transmission, including in communal settings (e.g., schools, workplaces).



# COVID-19 Screening In The Nursing Home

## Testing-Based Screening

- Viral (swab)
  - Rapid, point-of-care
  - Combination (flu + COVID-19)
- Limitations
  - Labor-intensive
  - Costly

## Symptom-Based Screening

- Self-report
  - COVID-19 symptoms
  - Temperature check
- Limitations
  - Assumes full disclosure
  - Asymptomatic carriers

# Testing-Based Screening

- Proactive vs. reactive use
- Use yields fewer overall infections than symptom-based screening
- Early awareness of infection helps prevent outbreaks
  - Prioritizes infection prevention
  - Facilities adhere more strictly to infection prevention & control.

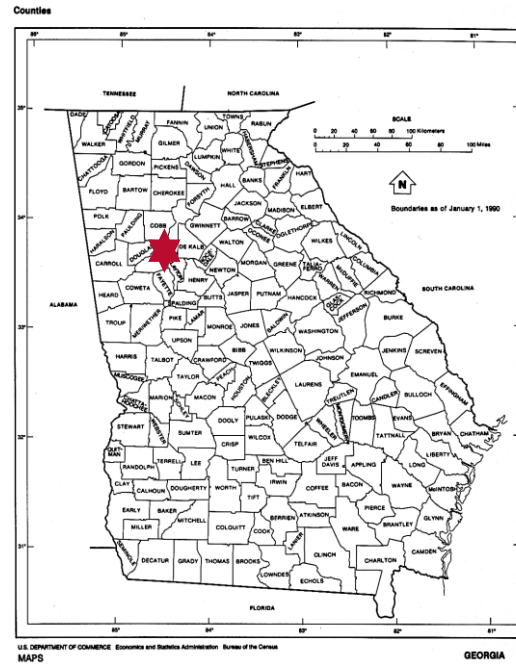
# Testing-Based Screening

- CMS Guidance (August 26, 2020)
  - County positivity rate is < 5%: Monthly testing
  - County positivity rate is 5-10%: Weekly testing
  - County positivity rate >10%: Twice weekly testing

# Nursing Home Screening- 3 Cases



Washington



Georgia



France

# LTC Screening Case #1- King County, Washington

- COVID-19 positive LTC staff member
- CDC did symptom assessments and viral testing of residents
- Residents categorized as asymptomatic or symptomatic
- Among the 30% of residents with positive tests
  - 43% had symptoms day of testing
  - 57% asymptomatic

**Take Home Message:** Symptom-based screening may fail to identify those with COVID.



# LTC Screening Case #2- Fulton County, Georgia

- **Facility-wide testing in response to positive COVID-19 case (N=15)**
  - High prevalence of additional cases in residents (28.0%) and staff (7.4%) found at initial testing
  - Prevalence also high during follow up testing in residents (42.4%) and staff (11.8%)
- **Facilities testing as preventive strategy before case identified (N=13)**
  - Low prevalence of residents (0.5%) and staff (1.0%) initially and overall after follow up (1.5% and 1.7%, respectively)

**Take Home Message:** Preventive screening more effective in preventing COVID-19 infections in LTC facilities.

# Screening Case #3- Maine-et-Loire, France

- 5-week retrospective observational study
- Objective: Describe COVID-19 symptoms in residents & staff
- COVID-19 positive: 47% residents and 24% staff
- Findings:
  - Residents had general & respiratory signs WITH geriatric syndromes (falls, confusion).
  - Older residents (> age 90) fewer and more non-specific symptoms
  - 41% staff members asymptomatic

**Take Home Message:** Findings support importance of preventive mass screenings in nursing homes.

# Symptom-Based Screening

- Despite limitations, its use is recommended
- Wide variance of implementation & management

# Screening- Facility A





# Screening- Facility B





# Screening- Facility C



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- All individuals coming in facility



Triage with DON

# Screening Staff Members

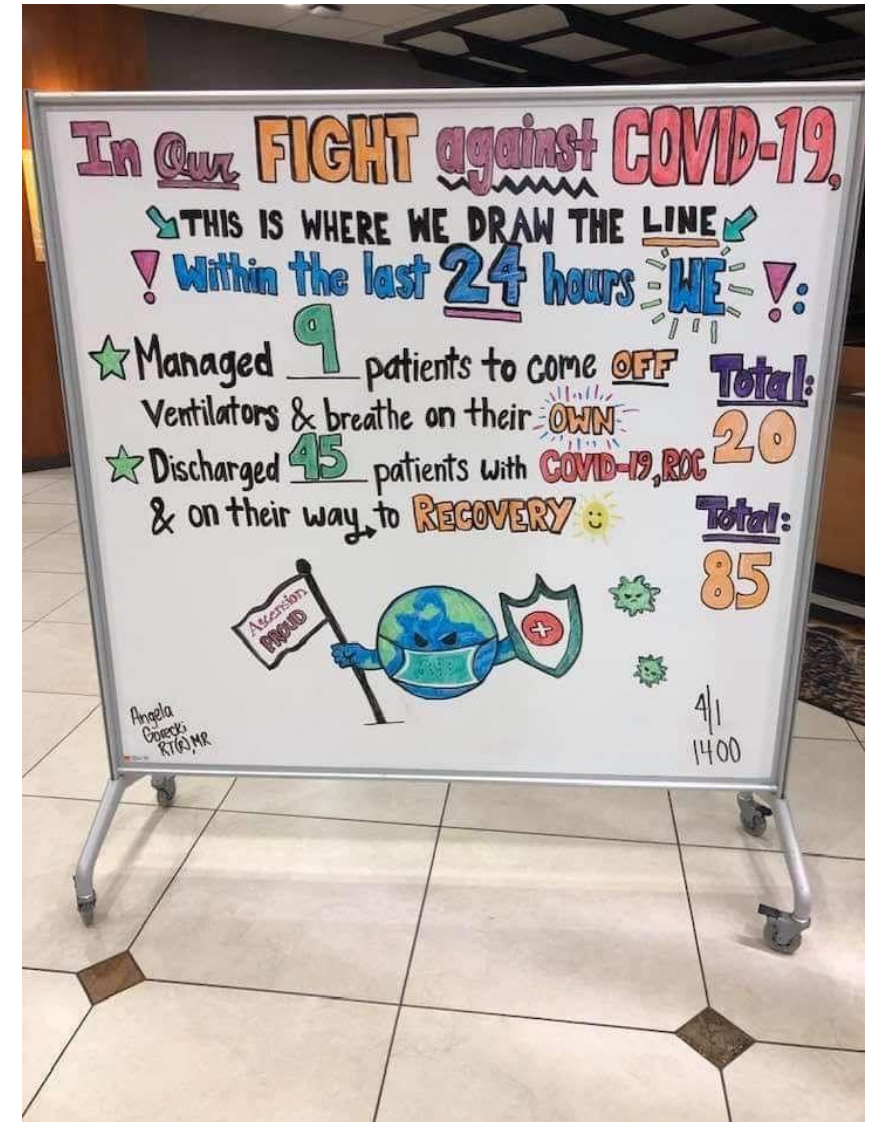
- Who is checking symptom logs?
- Staff member compliance with logs
- Improving disclosure of symptoms
  - Contingency work plans?
  - Creating a culture of trust



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# Keeping Staff & Families Updated

- Engage MD & APRN leadership
- Weekly conference calls
- Social media



<https://www.wxyz.com/news/coronavirus/metro-detroit-hospital-techs-encouraging-messages-give-hope-during-covid-19-crisis>

# Addressing COVID-19 Caution Fatigue

- Break the cycle
  - Boost staff morale
    - Recognition
    - Holiday decorations & music
    - Food
  - Highlight residents/staff who have recovered
  - Leadership must lead by example



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