



Nursing Home Isolation Unit Supplemental Funding - Program Guidance *December 2, 2020*

Program Summary

In response to the growing number of Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) positive cases and the increase in the utilization of hospital beds in the State, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) published a request for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities to submit plans for isolation spaces in their facilities. Rhode Island EOHHS is providing supplemental funding to those nursing facilities who establish designated isolation spaces and accept COVID-19 positive hospital discharge patients in order to expand access to nursing facility care for individuals no longer requiring a hospital level of care.

Isolation spaces in facilities are intended to provide short-term nursing facility services to COVID-19 positive residents no longer needing a hospital level of care, while ensuring all necessary precautions are taken to protect other nursing facility residents who do not have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis from exposure. In order to qualify to receive a supplemental payment to operate a COVID-19 positive isolation, a nursing facility provider must meet the substantive criteria established in this Program Guidance document and submit an attestation of compliance with such substantive criteria in the form and manner specified herein.

This Program will distribute up to \$250,000 in funding to approved nursing facilities to be used for the supplemental funding required to operate isolation spaces in facilities during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Funds will be distributed to Program Applicants in a lump sum upon receipt of a completed subaward Agreement.

Funding and Application Dates

Key dates for the **Nursing Home Isolation Space Supplemental Funding** Program (“**Program**”) are as follows:

- **December 4, 2020:** Applications available online at EOHHS website.
- **December 8, 2020 at noon:** Applications due to the State.
- **December 18, 2020:** Funds disbursed to facilities through MMIS

Criteria for Establishing a COVID-19 Positive Isolation Space to Receive supplemental payments

For a nursing facility provider to set up a qualifying isolation space, the facility must meet the criteria described herein and the criteria outlined in the RIDOH memorandum dated October 26, 2020 (“RIDOH Memorandum”). The facility must also be willing to accept hospital discharge COVID-19 positive patients no longer requiring a hospital level of care. The provider must attest to its compliance with those criteria via the application form provided at Appendix A of the Subaward Application document. The providers that submit an attestation regarding their compliance with the criteria set forth in this document, and whose attestation is accepted by EOHHS, shall be eligible for the Program supplemental payment. The payment methodology for eligible nursing facilities is described below.



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To establish a qualifying isolation space, and become eligible for the associated Program supplemental payments from EOHHS, the nursing facility provider must meet the following criteria:

- The nursing facility must have identified and established a separate isolation space within the nursing facility in which it can isolate and care for COVID-19 positive residents.
- The isolation space established by the nursing facility must be on an isolated wing, unit, or floor that creates meaningful separation between the isolation space in which the facility isolates the COVID-19 positive residents and the space in which the facility provides care to those who are COVID-19 negative or untested and asymptomatic. A curtain or a moveable screen does not provide meaningful separation for the purposes of this requirement. Any measures used to create separation must meet Life Safety Code requirements.
- The isolation space must be separated in such a way that does not require nursing facility personnel maintaining the building or providing services to the residents in the isolation space to go through areas in which the negative or asymptomatic residents are receiving care.
- The nursing facility must have:
 - o Policies and procedures for maintaining strict infection control practices and testing protocols;
 - o Completed CMS designed training to help staff combat the spread of coronavirus in Nursing Homes. CMS developed this training in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and expert stakeholders and announced the training on August 25, 2020. The training is free to access on a public CMS website; instructions on how to create an account and take the training are available at qsep.cms.gov/welcome.aspx;
 - o Policies and procedures to ensure no comingling of COVID-19 positive residents with other residents outside of the isolation space;
 - o Separate and segregated staffing teams to provide care for the COVID-19 positive residents in the isolation space; and
 - o A heating, air conditioning, and ventilation system that has been serviced in accordance with manufacturer recommendations to include appropriate air filtration, increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, maintain adequate humidity; and as possible has undertaken reasonable efforts to create a negative pressure space.
- The nursing facility must be in compliance with all applicable state and federal statutory and regulatory requirements, including but not limited to those established under: 216-RICR-40-10-1 Professional Licensing and Facility Regulations and 42 CFR 483 Requirements for States and Long Term Care Facilities.
- The nursing facility must be compliant with current state and federal regulatory requirements for infection control practices in nursing facilities to include no immediate jeopardy incidents since March 9, 2020.



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- The nursing facility shall remain in continued compliance with all conditions identified in items listed above for the duration of the Public Health Emergency or duration of operation of the designated isolation space.
- The nursing facility shall monitor and regularly update its practices based upon the most current infection control and COVID-19 guidance issued by RIDOH, CMS, and the CDC.
- The nursing facility shall not deny admission to a person because they are confirmed to be infected with COVID-19, regardless of whether the individual is entering from a hospital, the community, or another setting, unless the nursing facility documents that it does not have sufficient bed capacity or staffing capacity, or is otherwise clinically unable to provide appropriate services to such person.
- The nursing facility shall be responsive to hospital requests for discharge planning and available to accept new admissions, as appropriate given its staffing and clinical care capacity, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., seven (7) days a week.
- The nursing facility shall submit reports to the State Healthcare Coordination Center (HCC) on the number of unoccupied and available beds in the isolation space in the form and manner specified by the HCC.

Program Application Requirements

In order to receive funding through this Program, eligible agencies must submit a completed Subaward Application to EOHHS via email on or before the due date listed above. The Subaward Application includes the following requirements:

1. Signed Attestation to confirm that nursing facility meets the criteria established by EOHHS for the operation of a COVID-19 isolation space within the nursing facility.
2. Signed subaward agreement to confirm that the Applicant's information is correct and that the Applicant agrees to comply with all the terms and conditions of the Agreement.
3. Signed commitment to retain funds in a separate account for payments related to this Program and to provide progress reports as required by the State.

Applicants must agree and commit to all elements listed above in order to be eligible to receive this Program funding.

All questions regarding this Program should be directed to: OHHS.MedicaidCOS@ohhs.ri.gov with "Nursing Home Isolation Space" in the subject line.

Supplemental Payment Methodology

EOHHS recognizes the additional cost of care associated with establishing dedicated isolation spaces in nursing facilities, such as hiring additional staff, implementing additional screening and sanitation measures, or caring



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for residents with higher acuity. Accordingly, EOHHS is establishing a supplemental payment to eligible nursing facilities that establish qualifying isolation spaces, as described in this document to support the requirement for additional nursing facility supplies.

Calculation and Distribution of Supplemental Payments

EOHHS will calculate the Program payment for each qualifying nursing facility provider as follows utilizing Coronavirus Relief Funds:

- An eligible nursing facility's supplemental payment will be based on the number of Nursing Home Isolation beds the facility certifies under the criteria outlined above and Appendix A. Rhode Island EOHHS will provide a payment of one hundred and twenty-five dollars (\$125) per designated isolation bed per day to help mitigate the cost of establishing the unit. A nursing facility will be deemed to operate an isolation space beginning on the day the nursing facility submits the attestation of compliance to EOHHS (assuming such attestation is ultimately accepted by EOHHS), and may request supplemental funding to support operations up to December 30, 2020 (maximum of twenty-five (25) days).
- The supplemental payment for each eligible nursing facility will be calculated as follows:
 - Multiply the # Isolation Beds designated by the # Days the bed will be available to accept hospital discharge patients (up to a maximum of twenty-five (25) days).
 - Multiply the product calculated above. by one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125.00) per day
 - The amount calculated utilizing the above multipliers will equal the nursing facility's supplemental Program payment.

EOHHS will distribute payments as soon as possible after receiving and confirming the Subaward Applications.

Eligible Uses of Funds and Reporting Requirements

Funds received through this Program must be used for the expenses required to set up and operate the designated isolation space, including but not limited to PPE, supplies, equipment, construction expenses, and costs of installation.

Applicants will be required to report to EOHHS at the end of the grant period on the use of Program funds and their methods of tracking payments. Applicants will have until December 30, 2020 to utilize Program funds. If funds are not utilized by December 30, 2020, any unexpended Program funds must be returned to the State.

Once Program funds are utilized, successful Applicant Subaward recipients are instructed to keep detailed and complete financial records demonstrating that funds received through this Program are spent in accordance with these requirements. Subaward recipients of these Program funds shall be subject to an audit. In the event of an



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audit, if the Subaward recipient is found to have used funds for ineligible expenses, the Subaward recipient will be considered in violation of the Subaward Agreement at which point RI EOHHS may begin the process of recouping all or a portion of the Program funds awarded. The State will determine whether the full subaward or a portion of the subaward shall be recouped based on the State's assessment of the unique circumstances of each violation of the Subaward Agreement.