



Nursing Home Isolation Unit Supplemental Funding - Program Guidance *January 24, 2022*

Program Summary

In response to increases in the number of Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) positive cases and the subsequent increase in the utilization of hospital beds in the State in late 2020, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) published a request for nursing homes to submit plans for isolation spaces in their facilities. Now, due to the growing number of COVID-19 positive cases and hospitalizations, RIDOH, through the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is providing supplemental funding to those nursing facilities that have established designated isolation spaces and will accept COVID-19 positive patients via hospital discharge 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, uninfected nursing facility residents from exposure. In order to qualify to receive a supplemental payment to operate a COVID-19 positive isolation space, 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 funding to approved nursing facilities to supplement the costs required to increase access to care for individuals no longer requiring a hospital level of care by admitting them to isolation spaces in nursing facilities during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Funds will be distributed to up to ten (10) Program Applicants, including original subawardees, in a lump sum upon receipt of a completed Subaward Agreement. Each participating facility will receive \$20,000 per increment of five (5) dedicated beds in an isolation space for the distinct purpose of providing care in an isolation unit for COVID-19 positive residents being discharged from hospitals for 30 days (e.g., a facility would receive \$20,000 per month for five dedicated beds for COVID-positive hospital discharges, \$40,000 per month for ten dedicated beds, etc.).

Funding and Application Dates

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Please allow up to ten (10) business days for review. Following review, RIDOH will notify approved nursing homes in writing and nursing homes will have up to ten (10) business days from the date of approval to begin accepting residents.

The lump sum payment for the number of approved beds will be disbursed to facilities through the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) on the next standard nursing home payment cycle through Gainwell.

Criteria for Establishing a COVID-19 Positive Isolation Space to Receive Supplemental Payments

To establish a qualifying isolation space and become eligible for the associated Program supplemental payments from RIDOH through 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; while this isolation space may include beds to be used for existing residents who test positive for COVID-19 beyond the minimum of 5 beds allocated for hospital discharges through this Program, those beds are not subject to the supplemental funds.



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- The isolation space must meet the criteria described herein and the criteria outlined by the CDC in [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Spread in Nursing Homes | CDC](#) (guidance listed under “**Identify Space in the Facility that Could be Dedicated to Monitor and Care for Residents with Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection**”).
- The isolation space established by the nursing facility must be on an isolated wing, unit, or floor that creates meaningful separation between the COVID-19 positive residents and the facility’s residents 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:
 - Policies and procedures for maintaining strict infection control practices and testing protocols;
 - Completed CMS-designed training to help staff combat the spread of COVID-19 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 <https://qsep.cms.gov/welcome.aspx>;
 - Policies and procedures to ensure no comingling of COVID-19 positive residents with other residents outside of the isolation space;
 - Separate and segregated staffing teams to provide care for the COVID-19 positive residents in the isolation space; and
 - 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 should 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 Licensing of Nursing Facilities 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.
- The nursing facility must have not had any immediate jeopardy incidents since January 1, 2021.
- 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, unless the nursing facility documents that it does not have sufficient bed capacity or is otherwise clinically unable to provide appropriate services to such



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person.

- The nursing facility shall be responsive to hospital requests for discharge planning and available to accept new admissions, as appropriate given its bed availability and clinical care capacity, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., seven (7) days a week.
- The nursing facility shall submit via email the following reports to RIDOH's Healthcare Coordination and Response Group in a format provided by RIDOH to include, but not limited to:
 - Census and number of open beds (by sex) in the isolation unit (report due daily)
 - Number of admissions per day, by sex, and by originating facility; list of discharges per week with length of stay of each resident (report due weekly)

Program Application Requirements

In order to receive funding through this Program, eligible agencies must submit a completed Subaward Application (Appendix A) to RIDOH and EOHHS via email. The Subaward Application includes the following requirements:

1. Signed attestation to confirm that nursing facility meets the criteria established by RIDOH 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 provide daily and weekly reporting as described above.

Applicants must agree to and abide by 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.



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Supplemental Payment Methodology

RIDOH and EOHHS recognize the additional costs associated with operating dedicated isolation spaces in nursing facilities, such as hiring additional staff, implementing additional screening and sanitation measures, and caring for residents with higher acuity. Accordingly, RIDOH, through EOHHS, is establishing a supplemental payment utilizing the MMIS to eligible nursing facilities that establish qualifying isolation spaces, as described in this document, to support maximization of nursing facility capacity.

Calculation and Distribution of Supplemental Payments

RIDOH is seeking up to 10 facilities, with a minimum of five (5) isolation beds per facility, for up to 50 beds total statewide, to provide care in their isolation units for 30 days. Depending on the number of applications and the projected demand for available nursing home beds for COVID-19-positive hospital discharges, geographic dispersion throughout the State will be considered in the selection of facilities.

An eligible nursing facility's supplemental payment will be \$20,000 per every 5 beds per 30 days to help mitigate the cost of operating the unit. A nursing facility will be approved to operate an isolation space under this program on the business day following the date the nursing facility receives written approval from RIDOH; the facility may request a delayed start date of up to 10 days if additional staffing or other resources are needed to begin operations (payment by EOHHS will then come in the next standard nursing home payment cycle through Gainwell). Depending on need for continued service (to be determined by RIDOH) and available funding, participating nursing facilities may be offered the opportunity to request supplemental funding to support operations for consecutive periods of 30 days. Requests for these extensions must be received by RIDOH at least 7 days prior to the end of the 30-day period in which the nursing facility is already successfully operating its isolation unit under this program.

EOHHS will distribute payments as soon as possible after RIDOH receives and confirms the Subaward Applications.

Eligible Uses of Funds and Reporting Requirements

Funds received through this Program must be used for the expenses required to operate the designated isolation space, including but not limited to additional staff costs, PPE, supplies, and equipment. Successful Applicant Subaward recipients will be instructed to keep detailed and complete financial records in accordance with RIDOH's direction.

In addition to the daily and weekly reporting described above, each participating facility will submit to RIDOH within 30 days of the mutual agreement to discontinue this supplemental program at the facility, a final report that includes the number of residents who were admitted into the program-designated unit, the average length of stay in the unit, and the numbers of residents by final disposition (e.g., transferred within the facility, discharged home, discharged to another facility). A brief summary of lessons learned about operating a unit as part of this program must also be included.