

Respiratory Season Reloaded: COVID Lessons Learned and Why Compliance is Still Key

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Objectives

- Identify key infection prevention lessons from COVID and respiratory illness
- Apply lesson learned from 2020 to current respiratory season (COVID, influenza, RSV).
- Understand why masking compliance remains a critical safety intervention.
- Develop strategies to improve staff masking adherence without creating conflict or burnout



2020 COVID-19

- Rapid and serve impact
- Challenges and response gaps.
- Media



COVID-19 and Respiratory Season Today

- Similar challenges in respiratory season
- Continuing pressure from COVID, influenza, RSV
- Why LTC remains vulnerable



Respiratory Viruses Spread Fast in LTC

- High-density environment
- Medically fragile population
- Rapid virus movement between units



The Role of Staff Behavior

- Staff movement drives exposure risk
- PPE lapses can significantly increase spread
- Small actions = big outcomes in LTC outbreaks



PPE: Correct Use Still Matters

- Proper donning & doffing
- Hand hygiene integration
- Consistency across shifts and roles



Current Respiratory Landscape

- Continued circulation of COVID
- Overlapping influenza & RSV threats
- Lower vaccination rates
- More opportunities for co-infection in residents



Why LTC Is Still High Risk

- Resident frailty
- Low vaccination rates
- Close-contact care
- Frequent staff-resident interactions
- Visitors & contractors as additional vectors



Mask Compliance

Why Masking Still Matters

- Proven protection for residents
- Reduces outbreak size & duration
- Consistency saves lives and resources



Costs of Non-Compliance

- Increased transmission
- Higher hospitalization rates
- Citations: F880, F883, F887
- Financial impact on facility (staffing shortages, citations, penalties)



Forgotten High-Transmission Zones

- Break rooms
- Nursing stations
- Supply rooms
- Hallways where masking often slips



Communicating the Why

- Use data-driven messaging
- Show how decisions are made
- Build trust through transparency



Leadership & Practice

Moving Policy Into Practice

- Clear expectations
- Reinforcement and reminders
- Removing barriers to compliance



Leadership's Influence on Culture

- Leaders set the tone
- Modeling compliance builds credibility
- Supportive environments drive habits



Coaching & Education

- Positive reinforcement over punitive approaches
- Practical refreshers
- Preventing high-scope, high-severity citations through preparedness



Key Messages

- Respiratory viruses are predictable
- LTC residents remain highly vulnerable
- Staff behavior determines outbreak size
- Masking compliance is protective
- Leadership is a strong predictor of compliance



Discussion & Questions

- Challenges
- Success Stories
- Questions

