

**THIS IS AN OFFICIAL WEST VIRGINIA HEALTH ALERT NUMBER 172-11-13-2020 (2<sup>nd</sup> Alert)**  
Distributed via the WV Health Alert Network – **November 13, 2020**



## **HEALTH ALERT #172**

# **Reporting of COVID-19 Deaths**

**TO:** West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and Other Healthcare Facilities

**FROM:** Ayne Amjad, MD, MPH, Commissioner and State Health Officer  
Bureau for Public Health  
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

**DATE:** November 13, 2020

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:** Please distribute to community health providers, hospital-based physicians, infection control preventionists, laboratory directors, and other applicable partners.

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** Please distribute to association members, staff, etc.

As the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), Bureau for Public Health (BPH) continues to respond to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), BPH would like to remind everyone about COVID-19 death reporting.

COVID-19 remains a Category 1A Reportable Condition in West Virginia ([Order 64 CSR-7](#)). Deaths related to COVID-19 are **immediately** reportable to the local health department (LHD) for the patient's county of residence by telephone. There are no exceptions.

Upon reporting a COVID-19 related death to the LHD by telephone, you must follow-up by completing the form – *Report A Death Associated With Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)* and sending it by secure facsimile to the respective LHD the same day. Instructions for reporting COVID-19 deaths and a copy of the COVID-19 Death Report form can be found on our website at [www.coronavirus.wv.gov](http://www.coronavirus.wv.gov) under Providers.

Timely reporting of COVID-19 deaths is essential to anticipate and respond to the disease. The timeliness of receiving death reports is crucial in determining our data when it comes to the DHHR Dashboard and, in turn, determining our future alert system of the state. Although death certificates are certified and submitted to the West Virginia Health Statistics Center, we typically encounter a two-week lag from the report of the death via death certificate and the date of death. To avoid a lag in reporting a COVID-19 related death, we are requesting all healthcare providers and partners (i.e. coroners, funeral directors, medical examiners, etc.) notify their LHD as soon as they are aware the death is COVID-19 related.

For information about certifying COVID-19 deaths, please see [Guidance for Certifying Deaths Due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) developed by the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

For questions about this alert, please contact OEPS at 1 (800) 423-1271, ext. 1; (304) 558-5358 ext. 2; or the 24/7 answering service at (304) 342-5151.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

**Categories of Health Alert messages:**

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance. Warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.

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