

# Tip Sheet for NHSN COVID-19 Data Reporting

This document was created to help provide guidance and problem-solving with possible questions users may have for COVID-19 reporting in the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). The information contained therein was obtained via various resources created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The page numbers referenced below with each tip can be found in the [Facility Reporting PDF document](#)

## 1. Understanding the difference between a “Pathway” and “Data Element” (Refer to pages 10-12)

Each section in the module is organized by a specific focus called **Pathway**

**Data Element** is the response or count provided to specific questions within each pathway

## 2. Data reporting frequency (Refer to page 13) **CDC submits COVID-19 reports to CMS every Monday.**

- CMS Interim Final Rule states that facilities must report **at least** once a week. You can choose to report once a week or **up to** daily, depending on what works best with the facility.
- **NOTE: If you switch from daily/multiple times a week to weekly reporting**, be sure to start with the first date that hasn't been reported since data was last submitted.

## 3. Methods to report data into NHSN: Manual entry and uploading data (Refer to page 22)

- Daily reporting or reporting multiple times per week should be done manually.
- Reporting data one time a week can be entered manually or via upload with a CSV document.  
**NOTE:** The upload option is located below the calendar. You can download a template of the CSV files for each pathway by clicking the “Download CSV Template” button (see below).

**A.** Data upload using a CSV file

**B.** Download CSV Template, which can be used to upload facility COVID-19 data.

**C.** Export data in a table format using the “Export CSV”

The page numbers referenced below with each tip can be found in the [Facility Reporting PDF document](#).

4. If you're submitting data but it's not reflected on the CMS website, make sure the CCN, participation date and facility type are accurately entered in NHSN under **Facility** → **Facility Info**



- To verify if the facility CCN, participation date and facility type listed in NHSN is correct, refer to the [lookup tool](#) and follow the instructions below: (Refer to pages 27-31 of the [NHSN Enrollment document](#))

- Using the left navigation pane, select "Basic Search" under "Tool."
- On the next page, enter your facility information and click the "Search" button.
- Select your facility on the "Basic Search Results Report" screen to view the CCN. **Do not select the laboratory profile and CCN, which includes letters.**
- Compare your CCN generated by the lookup tool (see sample to the right) to the CCN recorded in NHSN. If these differ, enter the correct CCN for your facility.

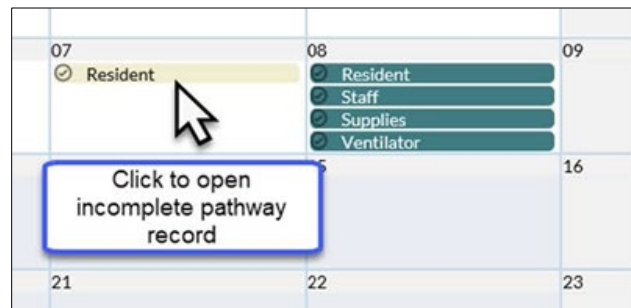


- NOTE:** If you're unable to identify the reason for data not showing on the CMS website, contact the NHSN helpdesk [NHSN@cdc.gov](mailto:NHSN@cdc.gov) to look further into the issue.

- In the subject line, type "LTC COVID-19 reporting issue for [YOUR FACILITY NAME]" to make it easier for the helpdesk staff to identify that the issue pertains to the COVID-19 module.
- In the body, include the facility name, CCN and issue with data not displaying in the CMS report.

5. How to tell if data reporting is complete for each day

- Completed data reporting** is when all four pathway topics are shown in **green** for the day. This means all the questions have been answered for each of the four pathways. **NOTE:** If a pathway topic is missing from a date, that means the topic was skipped or the data entry was not saved. You will need to click on the calendar date, select the appropriate pathway tab, complete reporting and save.

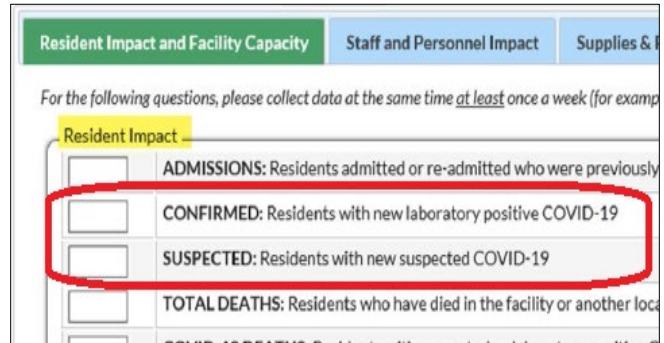


- Incomplete data** will show the pathway topic in a light beige color on the calendar. This means the pathway was saved with one or more questions unanswered. You can go back and edit the data by clicking on the pathway, answer all questions, then save.

The page numbers referenced below with each tip can be found in the [Facility Reporting PDF document](#).

6. Suspected vs. Confirmed data reporting (Refer to page 61)

- Only count resident or staff as “Suspected” if you’re planning to run a lab test or are isolating because a resident or staff member is showing signs and symptoms. Do not count in the “Suspected” field if there are no signs and symptoms and you’re just testing to rule out **AND** results come back negative. However, if results come back positive for an individual who did not have signs or symptoms, count them only in the “Confirmed” field.
- If a resident was counted as “Suspected” for a day and then confirmed to be positive for COVID-19 another day, do not remove them from the “Suspected” field but count them in the “Confirmed” field the day they were confirmed to have COVID-19.
- **Residents should not be counted more than 1x** for each field unless the resident recovers and gets re-exposed after some time has gone by since their last test showed negative.



7. Surveillance Tips

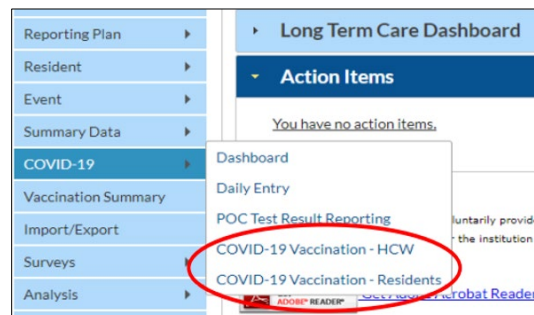
- Collect and record daily/non-daily data at the same time every day or days if reporting multiple times a week.
- If reporting once a week, report on the same day and time every week
- Use a **line list** data collection form to track daily surveillance. Below are forms that reflect the questions in NHSN for each pathway to help you with creating a line list.
  - a) [Resident Impact and Facility Capacity form](#)
  - b) [Staff and Personnel Impact form](#)
  - c) [Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment form](#)
  - d) [Ventilator Capacity and Supplies form](#)

8. Methods to contact SAMS and NHSN (Refer to page 70 in the [NHSN Enrollment PDF document](#) for more information on reasons to contact each helpdesk) **NOTE:** Due to a high number of incoming email messages for both helpdesk resources, there may be a delay in receiving email responses, between 5-7 days.

- SAMS Helpdesk: [sams-no-reply@cdc.gov](mailto:sams-no-reply@cdc.gov) **OR** call (877) 681-2901, option #2 between 8 a.m.-6 p.m. ET
- NHSN Helpdesk: [nhsn@cdc.gov](mailto:nhsn@cdc.gov)

## NHSN Vaccination Reporting Option for Staff and Resident Reporting

This reporting option allows facilities to report cumulative vaccination data for staff and residents. As shown in the snapshot, reporting option is accessed under the COVID-19 tab on the NHSN facility account homepage.



## Common Questions to Address for NHSN Vaccination Reporting

**Staff and residents obtain their vaccines through pharmacies or vaccination clinics. Do I still need to report?**

**A:** Yes, pharmacies and vaccination clinics are not reporting into NHSN. They report data into a separate system that goes to the state. The vaccination data reported by these type of providers is not as thorough as NHSN data (i.e., identify who is a facility health care worker vs. a resident)

**Are new admissions counted in the cumulative data if the new resident has already completed their vaccinations or the first dose?**

**A:** Yes, count the new admissions in the total resident count (Question No. 1) and cumulative number count (Question No. 2). For Question No. 2, also indicate which option applies to their vaccine status.

**Do I have to go back and report the weeks the vaccines occurred (i.e., January)?**

**A:** No. Enter any cumulative data that applies to current staff and residents moving forward.

**Should I continue to count staff who have left and residents who have been discharged in the cumulative count?**

**A.** No, staff or residents who are no longer associated with the facility will stop being included in the total and cumulative count the following week their affiliation has ended. Also, it is encouraged to use the Data Tracking Worksheet to assist in accurately tracking staff and residents. The Data Tracking Worksheet for staff and residents at LTCFs can be used to track the number of staff and residents who receive COVID-19 vaccination.

**If we are reporting for a week, why do we report on someone who is on vacation for two weeks?**

**A:** HCP who are eligible to have worked include employees, contractors, students, trainees and volunteers who are scheduled to work in the facility at least one day every two weeks. Working any part of a day is considered as working one day. Include HCP even if they're on temporary leave during the week of data collection. Temporary leave is defined as less than or equal to two weeks in duration. Examples of temporary leave may include sick leave or vacation. In instances where temporary leave extends past two weeks, the health care worker should not be included in Question No. 1 for the current week of data collection.

**If facilities must include vaccination and therapeutic data reporting in NHSN submissions by 11:59 p.m. on Sundays when the reporting timeframe is Monday-Sunday, what happens if I miss someone in the count?**

**A:** Choose a specific date of the week (i.e., Thursdays or Fridays) to report vaccination data into NHSN. Any staff or residents missed in the count can either be added to the following cumulative weekly count or the NHSN user can go back to the prior week and edit the summary data to add those missed from that week.

**If there are no residents or staff members who received the vaccine within the week of reporting, do I need to report for that week?**

**A:** Yes, facilities should report cumulative data each week (rather than only new data). If there are no changes in the number of individuals at your facility or vaccination status, you would report the same numbers as the previous week. Because there could be new staff and/or residents joining or leaving the facility, coverage could change week to week even though no new vaccines are given. Therefore, weekly summaries are still needed.

*Example:*

- **Week 1:** Ten CNAs received only first dose of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Week 2:** Five more CNAs received only first dose of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.  
Facility should report 15 CNAs received only one dose of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine by end of Week 2.

**Are staff who work in other care settings in the building (i.e., CRC) also counted as eligible staff in Question No. 1 for the SNF?**

**A:** If a clinical staff member provides care in both care settings within the facility, they are to be included in the report, as they are providing a service to the SNF unit.

**How is the cumulative data determined for weekly reporting?**

**A:** Total number of residents occupying a bed for at least one day (24 hours) during the week of data collection. Include all HCP who were eligible to have worked at this facility for at least one day during the week of data collection. **NOTE:** Avoid adding prior week's total staff and residents counts to current week.

*Example:*

- Last week's eligible staff count was 62 and this week's eligible staff count is 61 (one staff member left facility). The total eligible staff count to report for this week is 61.

**Additional Resources:**

- [FAQ document](#) for additional information if you don't see your question addressed in this document.
- [Facility Reporting PDF document](#) **Common Module Questions** on pages 74-77
- [TIP Sheet for NHSN COVID-19 SAMS and Facility Enrollment](#)
- [Weekly COVID-19 Vaccination Data Reporting webpage](#)
- [Weekly HCP & Resident COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [Main LTCF COVID-19 Module](#)

*This material was prepared by Comagine Health, the Medicare Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization for Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 12SOW-T1-20-QIN-031*