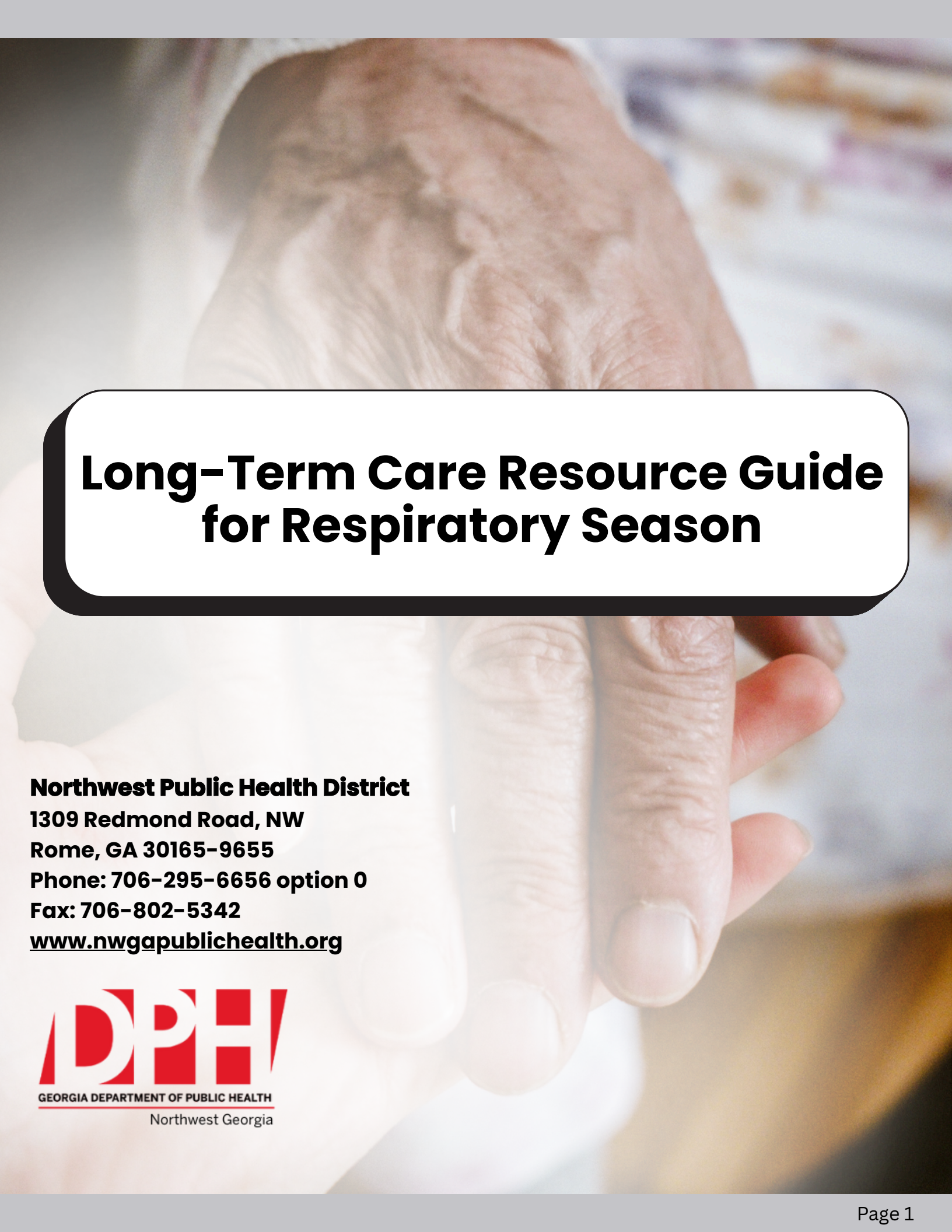


A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of an elderly person's hand, showing wrinkled skin and a gentle grip. The hand is positioned in the center of the frame, with fingers slightly curled. The background is out of focus, showing hints of a white surface and some colorful patterns.

Long-Term Care Resource Guide for Respiratory Season

Northwest Public Health District

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Northwest Georgia

Long-Term Care Resource Guide for Respiratory Season

Preventing the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19, RSV, and influenza in Long Term Care Facility (LTCF) settings requires not only vaccination, but testing, treatment, and implementing infection prevention and control measures. Below are some helpful links with resources for the respiratory season. Please note links are ever changing and this guide is geared for the 2026/2027 respiratory season. Please visit the NW Georgia Public Health website for updated resource links. To view the resources, please click on the links listed below.

Prepare for Respiratory Season

Vaccinate

- Provide recommended vaccines to residents and staff
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/hcp/clinical-overview/index.html>
- Why get vaccinated? Handout for residents, families and staff
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/downloads/lctf-why-get-vaccinated.pdf>
- Partner with pharmacies and healthcare facilities to provide vaccines in house

Allocate Resources

- Take stock of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfectant products, and order testing kits
- Have hand hygiene stations readily available
- Inform staff of sick leave policy
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/healthcare-personnel-epidemiology-control/index.html#toc>
 - <https://mailchi.mp/ghca/cdc-updates-respiratory-virus-guidance-for-health-care-personnel?e=3f4e1af22c>
- Develop plans to test and treat sick individuals
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/hcp/clinical-guidance/testing-guidance-for-outpatient.html>
- Consider a consult with facility engineers to improve ventilation in rooms and shared spaces
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/project-firstline/hcp/training/factsheet-ventilation.html>

Educate

- Educate staff and residents on infection prevention (IP) protocols including PPE donning and doffing and hand hygiene
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/media/pdfs/Toolkits-PPE-Sequence-P.pdf>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/hygiene.html>

- Share/post communication materials about respiratory viruses through posters and signs reminding others to mask
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/project-firstline/hcp/communication-resources/masks.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/project-firstline/hcp/training/infographic-respiratory-ic.html>
- Consider having visitors and healthcare personnel (HCP) wear masks during respiratory season
- Monitor infection trends in Georgia and the nation
 - <https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/acute-disease-epidemiology/viral-respiratory-diseases>
 - <https://dph.georgia.gov/flu-activity-georgia>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/data/index.html>

Respond to signs/symptoms

Infection Control

- Implement transmission based precautions, wear appropriate PPE
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/isolation-precautions/appendix-a-type-duration.html>
- Cohort and/or isolate residents, have meals served in rooms and cancel non-essential activities if possible
- Continue testing exposed residents and staff, especially for COVID and influenza, with consideration for other causes like RSV
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/overview-testing-sars-cov-2.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/hcp/testing-methods/index.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/hcp/clinical-overview/diagnostic-testing.html>
- Limit visitation and post notices about outbreak/illness in facility
- Restrict HCP movement from areas with illness to areas not affected by outbreak or dedicate HCP to illness areas only
- Consider cleaning the facility and personal items (water bottles, straws, etc.) more than usual to reduce spread

Treatment and Chemoprophylaxis (preventative treatment)

- Provide treatment for those with Influenza or COVID
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/healthcare-personnel-epidemiology-control/viral-respiratory-infections.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/outpatient-treatment.html>
- Administer influenza chemoprophylaxis to exposed residents and staff

Notify the Public Health District During an Outbreak

What determines an outbreak in LTCF?

- An **influenza outbreak** is 1 lab confirmed case with other cases of respiratory illness (not lab confirmed) in a unit **OR** when 2 resident cases are lab confirmed within 72 hours in the same unit
- A **COVID outbreak** is 2 or more residents with an epi linkage* who did not develop illness while in transmission precautions upon facility admission OR 3 or more residents/staff with epi linkage* with illness onset within 7 days of each other, including at least one lab-confirmed case
- ***Epi linkage**
 - Residents: overlap in same unit or ward, or potential to be cared for by common HCP during 7-day time period
 - Staff: potential to have been within 6ft for 15 minutes or longer while working in the facility 7 days prior to start of symptoms

Other Resources

Guidance and Recommendations

- Long term care respiratory virus toolkit
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/long-term-care-facilities/hcp/respiratory-virus-toolkit/index.html>
- Respiratory virus infection prevention
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/viral-respiratory-prevention/>
- Viral Respiratory Infections and Infection Control in Healthcare Personnel
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/healthcare-personnel-epidemiology-control/viral-respiratory-infections.html>
- View information on Georgia Public Health's Disease Reporting Requirements
 - <https://dph.georgia.gov/epidemiology/disease-reporting>

Communication Resources

- Vaccine counseling handout for residents and family in English, Spanish, and Chinese
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/downloads/ltrcf-why-get-vaccinated.pdf>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/downloads/ltrcf-why-get-vaccinated-es.pdf>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/downloads/ltrcf-why-get-vaccinated-chinese.pdf>
- PPE donning and doffing aid
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcare-associated-infections/media/pdfs/PPE-Sequence-P.pdf>
- Respiratory viruses factsheet
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/project-firstline/hcp/training/factsheet-respiratory-virus.html>
- Masking signage
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/project-firstline/hcp/communication-resources/masks.html>

Questions or Need to Report an Outbreak?

Contact Us:

NW GA PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT, EPIDEMIOLOGY STAFF

- Call: 706-295-6656 option 0 during normal business hours
- Fax: 706-802-5342