

# Long-term Care Facility POC Test Notification of Unsent Messages



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**  
Public Health Service  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

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To Our Long-term Care Facility Partners:

The Iowa Department of Public Health recently identified a problem in NHSN's nursing home SARS-CoV-2 point of care (POC) test data that has been scoped and quickly fixed by the NHSN team. The problem affected a small percentage of NHSN-generated electronic laboratory reporting (ELR) messages containing SARS CoV-2 POC test results data. The glitch in NHSN's ELR message generation affected 60,337 (0.84%) of the 7,179,340 messages that NHSN produced from October 23, 2020 through March 1, 2021. As a result of an infrequent scenario, the 60,337 messages intended for delivery to state health departments (SHDs) were not delivered, including 995 SARS-CoV-2 positive POC results. The NHSN team regrets the problem and is grateful to colleagues in Iowa for their assistance in fixing it as rapidly as possible. Also, the NHSN team has introduced additional steps in its message processing to avoid a recurrence of the rare scenario. On March 12, 2021, NHSN plans to send 2571 missing POC test messages dated February 25, - March 1, 2021 to SHDs, including 18 positive POC results. The positive POC results were from nursing homes in 3 states.

During the October 23, 2020 – March 1, 2021 time period, the messages NHSN inadvertently did not send to SHDs included messages intended for delivery to all 50 states and the District of Columbia. These messages included positive SARS-CoV-2 POC results that would otherwise have reached 39 states. The range of missing positive test results not delivered was 1 to 370 per state.

NHSN plans to deliver all unsent POC messages to SHDs via the standard process of HL7 messaging via the Association of Public Health Laboratories Informatics Messaging System (AIMS), unless a SHD decides to forgo receiving the messages.

Please accept our apologies for this problem. Complete access to all POC test results was available to all nursing homes throughout the October 23, 2020 – March 1, 2021 time period so that appropriate actions could be taken based on the test results. Weekly COVID-19 case and death data reporting by nursing homes which are displayed on CMS' public website was not affected. There is no action required on the part of nursing homes as a result of this issue, and NHSN is communicating details to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services for their awareness as well.

The NHSN team is committed to delivering the highest quality data to SHD and long-term care facility partners and we look forward to continuing the partnership we have forged during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

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