

May 13, 2020

**To All Fire Departments:**

On May 11, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott directed that 100 percent of staff and residents in Texas nursing facilities be tested for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in accordance with White House guidance.

Texas nursing facilities are licensed under the authority of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The testing teams may consist of state and/or local government personnel, including first responders from local fire departments.

As the Executive Commissioner of HHSC, I authorize fire department personnel to enter licensed nursing facilities for the purpose of collecting specimens for testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Testing teams must self-screen before entering the nursing facility and are expected to bring their own personal protective equipment. The teams are implementing the governor's direction and are authorized to enter the nursing facility.

If a nursing facility has questions about this authorization they should contact the HHSC Long Term Care Regulatory region for assistance.

Sincerely,



Phil Wilson