



ICYMI: New Public Data Shows Urgent Need for Testing, Protective Equipment at Virginia's Long-Term Care Facilities

New data released on May 18 by the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association (VHHA) highlights COVID-19 cases and personal protective equipment (PPE) needs across the state. This information reinforces the need for state and federal officials to continue to rally around long-term care providers to prioritize additional testing, personal protective equipment, staffing, and funding to address this crisis.

However, the “Licensed Nursing Homes Dashboard” shows only a partial picture of the ongoing needs of Virginia's long-term care facilities as they take unprecedented steps to prevent further spread of COVID-19.



Keith Hare, president and chief executive officer of Virginia Health Care Association-Virginia Center for Assisted Living, [joined](#) NPR-affiliate WVTF on May 19 to discuss the difficulty nursing homes and assisted living facilities are having getting personal protective equipment (PPE) as they provide high-touch care for residents. Currently, long-term care facilities are caring for more confirmed coronavirus cases than hospitals, with only a fraction of the PPE.

From [WTVF](#):

“The numbers are likely even higher, explains Keith Hare with the Virginia Health Care Association, because the response rate for nursing homes is between 80 and 90-percent. More significantly, the data does not include assisted living facilities.

“Can we say absolutely that every nursing home and every assisted living provider in Virginia has all the PPE they need to withstand an outbreak? No, we're not there yet,' Hare said during a phone interview Tuesday.

“Outbreaks at long term care continue to be responsible for almost 60-percent of COVID-19 deaths in the state. And when an outbreak occurs a facility starts burning through PPE.

“Hare says things have gotten better in the past month, and facilities with outbreaks have been able to rely on public officials for help.

“When the facilities have an outbreak the health department, the state, they have come in with additional PPE,’ he said.

“But, ideally, they’d be at the point where nursing homes and assisted living facilities have those supplies already on hand, or at least they know how much they would need and that the amount is available regionally.

“Federal officials have promised a two week supply to every nursing home in the state, but outside of Northern Virginia that hasn’t materialized yet. The Virginia Health Care Association is hopeful the materials will come in the next several weeks.”

THE ROANOKE TIMES

From the [Roanoke Times](#):

“Virginia Health Care Association/Virginia Center for Assisted Living CEO Keith Hare said, ‘We did what we were supposed to do. We locked the facilities down in terms of visitors. We already had infection-control measures in place, but we put in additional measures.’ Hare also said ‘the majority of the people living in Virginia’s nursing homes are very poor and incredibly sick and frail, and they have multiple illnesses.’ According to Hare, ‘We started in this virus without the level of personal protective equipment we needed. We tried to obtain additional supply lines. We were cut off. ... Then on top of that there had been significant lack of testing.’”



From the [Virginia Mercury](#):

“...Nursing homes across the state are experiencing disruptions in usual supply chains that make sourcing their own equipment uncertain at best, said CEO Melissa Andrews of LeadingAge Virginia, an association of nonprofit senior living centers.

“At the same time, they’re bearing the brunt of Virginia’s COVID-19 epidemic. A total of 182 outbreaks — more than half of those reported in the state — have occurred in long-term care facilities, according to data from the Virginia Department of Health. The same facilities account for just over 13 percent of the state’s known 31,140 cases, as of Tuesday, and more than half of its 1,014 deaths.

“Industry leaders are also concerned that the data is an undercount of the true supply needs across Virginia’s long-term care facilities. In a joint statement on Monday, three of the state’s largest senior living associations — LeadingAge Virginia, the Virginia

Assisted Living Association and Virginia Health Care Association–Virginia Center for Assisted Living — wrote that the dashboard presented ‘only a partial picture of the ongoing needs of Virginia’s long-term care facilities.’”

Richmond Times-Dispatch

From the [Richmond Times-Dispatch](#):

“The new dashboard also includes estimates of nursing homes that don't have access to ample supplies of personal protective gear, such as isolation gowns and medical-grade protective masks, despite earlier shipments from the depleted Strategic National Stockpile and escalating state efforts to distribute supplies it has purchased from private vendors.

“For example, the dashboard said that 18 nursing homes, or 9.5% of those reporting, lacked adequate supply of gowns and 11 did not have access to N-95 masks.

“In comparison, the hospital association dashboard on Monday shows no hospitals in need of additional personal protective equipment in the next 72 hours.”

For more information or to schedule an interview with the Virginia Health Care Association-Virginial Center for Assisted Living, contact Amy Hewett at amy.hewett@vhca.org.

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