

Bridge Team Guidance and Information

Bridge Team was created to assist long term long-term care facilities (LTCFs) with staffing and resource needs associated with COVID-19. Members of the Bridge Team include staff from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) and the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA).

Once COVID-19 testing within a facility indicates an emergency need, the Bridge Team will be activated. The team will collect relevant information from the facility and others on the ground to assist decision making and coordinate facility communication with all relevant state agencies, the Emergency Operations Center, health care zones, hospitals in the area, and the local health department.

The Bridge Team will be the point of contact until the emergency subsides. Once the Bridge Team's involvement is no longer necessary, the team will identify the most appropriate agency, hospital, or local health department to continue assistance and monitoring using state teams and resources.

WHEN TO ACCESS THE BRIDGE TEAM

Bridge Team services are available to LTCFs when:

- Provider issues, such as staffing, evacuation, and supplies challenges, could endanger the safe operation of the home.
- The needs of the facility exceed the availability of resources provided by a normal request to the local emergency management agency (EMA) or the partner hospital virtual PPE stockpile.

ENGAGING THE BRIDGE TEAM

When a LTCF or local organization supporting that facility identifies a potential emergency that requires support, it is that person's responsibility to contact the Bridge Team coordinator to launch the process. The Bridge Team will then utilize all necessary state resources to help the facility protect the health and safety of its residents.

STEP 1: Either a long-term care facility or a local organization contacts the Bridge Team coordinator once an issue, concern, or emergency has been identified.

Bridge Team Contacts	Name	Email	Phone
Primary Bridge Team Coordinator	Rick Hoover, ODH	ricky.hoover@odh.ohio.gov	614-752-6855
Assistant Bridge Team Coordinator	Jayson Rogers, ODH	jayson.rodgers@odh.ohio.gov	614-752-9156
Bridge Team Coordinator	Julie Davis, ODM	julie.davis@medicaid.ohio.gov	614-204-6549
Bridge Team Coordinator	Selina Jackson, ODH	selina.jackson@odh.ohio.gov	614-466-4792
Bridge Team Coordinator	Debra Walsh, ODH	debra.walsh@odh.ohio.gov	614-466-2306

General questions can be emailed to: bridgeteam@odh.ohio.gov

STEP 2: Bridge Team coordinator makes an initial call to the facility.

The facility should have the following information prepared before the call with the Bridge Team:

- All relevant facility information, including emails and phone numbers for caller and administrator.
- Information regarding your facility’s communication with the corporate office (if applicable), local health department, local hospital liaison, and regional healthcare coordinator or zone leads.
- Current census information.
- Number of COVID-19-positive residents in building.
- Number of COVID-19-positive staff, if applicable.
- Information about residents who need special consideration.
- Summary of staffing needs (e.g., how many nurses and aides are needed).
- Duration of need, in days or weeks.
- Any additional questions.

If the facility’s concerns fall outside an identified provider issue or can be triaged for lower level action, the Bridge Team coordinator will help identify appropriate local or state resources.

STEP 3: Bridge Team coordinator facilitates a call, if necessary, between the relevant state agencies and organizations to discuss needs and additional information needed, if any, to make a determination on Bridge Team support.

STEP 4: Bridge Team coordinator facilitates a call, if necessary, between the long-term care facility and relevant state agencies and organizations to address outstanding information, discuss needs, and deploy resources.

Organizations that may be included in this call are:

Local Health Department	Identified Hospital Partner
Hospital Zone Coordinator	Nursing Home Zone Lead
Facility and Corporate Owner (if applicable)	State of Ohio NH/RCF Transition Team (evacuation only)
The Ohio Emergency Management Agency	The Ohio National Guard

Once a determination of needs and resources to deploy has been identified, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA) will contact the local EMA and provide the essential elements of information that allow for a common operational picture of the situation. Concurrently, if a determination that state support is required, a mission request will be entered by the Ohio EMA Watch Office to the appropriate state agency for action. Once the mission request is fulfilled, Ohio EMA will notify the Bridge Team of completion.

STEP 5: The Bridge Team continues to monitor the emergency and coordinates calls and resources as necessary until the emergency is properly mitigated. Once the emergency has been adequately mitigated, the Bridge Team will hand off support management to an appropriate local partner.

BRIDGE TEAM SUPPORT

Staffing

If a facility is facing a critical staffing shortage due to COVID-19, the Bridge Team may deploy the following supports:

Licensee Bank Support

- The Licensee Bank Support is a list of over 1,000 medical professionals in Ohio who have indicated they are willing to work at an LTCF that is experiencing a staffing crisis. This staffing resource does not currently include state-tested nurse aides. Aide resources would need to be developed through the Contract Support resource.
- The Bridge Team will send an electronic request to these licensees and provide the facility with any respondent’s licensure

information and contact information.

Contracting Support

- The Bridge Team has a list of all staff support agencies in the state and can provide identified agencies to the LTCF to facilitate a wider reach of possible employees for that facility.

Hospital and Clinical Support

- The Bridge Team may connect LTCFs with local hospitals and clinicians to support the facility to identify better use of current staffing resources.

Healthcare Workforce Logistics Staffing Portal

- The state has contracted with a vendor to provide staffing resources in the event of a crisis staffing need. Like a staffing agency, once contracted with the facility, the vendor will assist the facility with identifying available staff for use by the facility.

Ohio National Guard

- The Ohio National Guard stands prepared to support a facility during a staffing crisis and will be activated when the need arises. This resource will only be activated as a last resort.

Supply Resources

If a facility is facing a supply shortage that would critically compromise the ability to safely provide patient care, the Bridge Team is able to deploy support once the facility has exhausted all available resources, including private vendors, local hospital contacts, virtual stockpile supply, etc.

- Once all other resources have been depleted.
- Work with LTCF to contact local EMA and local health department to procure necessary resources.
- Contact vendors to resolve supply issues.
- Pre-identified state resources for service support (i.e., laundry services).
- Access the Vendor Assistance Tracking List.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634) or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.