



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

161 Delaware Avenue Delmar, NY 12054-1393

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr. P.H.
Commissioner

Dennis P. Whalen
Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 31, 2005

DAL/DQS #05-15
RE: Nursing Home Surveillance and
Reporting System

Dear Nursing Home Administrator:

The New York State Department of Health Commerce System, also known as the Health Provider Network (HPN), is a secure network for information exchange and communications designed for shared use by the Department and its partners in public health. We are grateful for all efforts you've taken this past year toward enabling your facility to use this key department information resource.

At this time, the Department requests your assistance towards the successful implementation of the new HPN Nursing Home Surveillance and Reporting System that is designed to electronically gather information from nursing homes on a regular basis or during an emergency event. This application is patterned after the Health Emergency Response Data System (HERDS) that has been used by NYS hospitals since July, 2002 for information exchange during emergency events, for disease surveillance and for emergency preparedness surveys. The HERDS model has received national acknowledgement and awards as a public health best practice and we expect this new application to help simplify submission and retrieval of important data for nursing homes in a similar way.

A select number of nursing homes in the Capital District that represent a cross section of providers will be identified and invited by the Department to participate in a field test of the new application during November. Staff in the identified facilities will be trained in the use of the application and asked to complete the new Critical Assets Survey developed specifically for nursing homes. The nursing home Critical Assets Survey will standardize important facility resource information (such as communications, equipment and staff) into a single repository readily available to the Department, other governmental agencies and emergency responders. These staff will be asked to provide feedback regarding ease of use as well as clarity of questions. Those nursing homes selected to participate in the field test will be notified within the next two weeks.

We will review this feedback and make appropriate modifications. The Department anticipates statewide release of the Nursing Home Surveillance and Reporting System and the Critical Asset Survey in January 2006.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in helping to ensure the success of this important project. Further information on the HPN Nursing Home Surveillance and Reporting System will be posted on the HPN web page as available. Please contact Lisa Beaudoin, Project Manager at (518) 473.1809 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith W. Servis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "S".

Keith W. Servis, Director
Division of Quality & Surveillance
for Nursing Homes & ICFs/MR