

# “The lid is about to blow off” as federal government plans to collect and publish coronavirus info from nursing homes

The Bethlehem Gadfly coronavirus May 18, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the coronavirus* 

Gadfly’s latest post obsessing about lack of oversight of nursing homes came May 15.

Steve Thode followed with a strongly worded comment May 16.

And then we have this welcome information from the *WP* on the 17th.

Gadfly doesn’t think this regulation will cover all the facilities we would like.

*from Maria Sacchetti, “Federal government to begin gathering data on covid-19 deaths in nursing homes>” Washington Post, May 17, 2020.*

Nursing homes have been directed to report the number of coronavirus infections and deaths to the federal government by midnight Sunday so that health officials can assess the damage the pandemic has inflicted on sick and elderly residents and their caregivers in more than 15,000 homes nationwide.

Federal officials said they will collect the data weekly and publish it [online](#), along with the names of nursing homes, by the end of May. The data will offer a first look at the impact in such states as Texas and Virginia that have declined to identify nursing homes with covid-19 infections.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the federal agency that regulates the homes, said in an alert Friday that the [agency](#) “will be taking swift action and publicly posting this information so all Americans have access to accurate and timely information on COVID-19 in nursing homes.” The Trump administration’s plan capped months of frustration over the lack of information in many states as the death toll in nursing homes soared.

“It’s going to be ugly,” said Brian Lee, executive director of Families for Better Care, a national watchdog group for nursing homes and assisted-living facilities. “The lid is about to blow off.”

Nursing homes already must report infectious disease outbreaks to state and local health officials, and federal and state inspectors visit the homes and routinely publish their findings online. But families and watchdog groups complained early into the pandemic that many homes were not complying with the requirements, and most states initially were not publicly disclosing the names of nursing homes with outbreaks.

Under the new rules, nursing homes must notify residents and their designated family members about infections, and report key indicators to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention every week. CMS will publish the data and identify the nursing homes, though the names of residents and staff members are confidential under law.

Redfield acknowledged that the virus’s impact on nursing homes is “one of the great tragedies that we’ve all experienced together” and said the agency was taking steps to quickly gather the information. “This is critical we get in front of this and do comprehensive surveillance of everybody in these nursing homes,” Redfield said.