**Template Message to Use with Residents/Family on Testing**

Dear Residents and Family Members:

Over the next [INSERT TIMEFRAME, E.G. TWO WEEKS], our facility/community will be testing all staff and residents for COVID-19. We understand that this may cause some anxiety, so we want to explain why this is important for your or your loved one’s health and safety.

**Is there COVID-19 in the building?**

This is a proactive measure and does not mean that you or your loved ones are in immediate danger of contracting COVID-19. Our facility believes it’s important to take steps to protect residents and staff from COVID-19, and a facility-wide testing approach will improve our ability to identify and confront this threat. [**IF APPLICABLE**: [STATE GOVERNING BODY] is also requiring that all residents and staff in all long-term care facilities be tested across the state].

**Why is testing important?**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) poses a serious threat to older adults (especially 80 years old and older) and those with underlying health conditions. Since most of our residents fit this description, they are especially at risk if they contract COVID-19. We also know that COVID-19 can be spread by individuals who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. This means that staff or residents could have the virus, but not show any symptoms or not show symptoms (sometimes very mild ones) for days. This is why facility-wide testing will be helpful to identify anyone who may have the virus but not know it.

Testing will provide a level of reassurance that staff and residents are not going to transmit the virus to each other, or their own loved ones and family members. It will allow us to make informed decisions and take additional infection control measures, such as separating COVID positive patients from those who test negative, to protect them from contracting the virus. [EXPLAIN ANY SPECIFIC INFECTION PREVENTION CONTROL PRECAUTIONS YOU ARE TAKING].

Testing is also the first step toward allowing visitors to our facility again. We are making every effort to help residents safely engage with loved ones in-person while still recognizing the threat COVID-19 poses. [IF APPLICABLE, INSERT ANY STATE/LOCAL GUIDANCE OR FACILITY PRACTICES ON VISITORS]

**Will it hurt?**

Currently, the majority of tests that diagnose COVID-19 collect samples using a nasopharyngeal swab, which is done through your nasal cavity. The collection takes approximately 20 seconds. Some people experience discomfort or pain during the collection process, but it is momentary and does not cause long-lasting pain or discomfort. The nurse who collects the sample will take the time to explain the process to you or your loved one, and will work to make it as quick and smooth as possible.

**Can I refuse?**

[INSERT ANY RELEVANT STATE OR LOCAL POLICIES ON REFUSALS]

**When will I hear the results?**

Test results are expected to be available in [NUMBER] days from when the sample is collected. [INSERT NOTIFICATION PROCESS]. In the meantime, we will [ADAPT AS APPROPRIATE] continue to screen all essential personnel coming into the facility, restrict group activities, regularly clean and disinfect the building, and encourage social distancing among individuals where appropriate.

We are all in this together and appreciate your cooperation and understanding during this effort. We are here to provide support, resources and help during this difficult time. If you have additional concerns or want to discuss this further, please contact [NAME AND CONTACT INFO].