



## **Visitation Policy**

**Policy:** Visitation for Pennsylvania Skilled Nursing Facilities.

**Procedure:** To safely accommodate visitors into Skilled Nursing Facilities under PADOH guidance. Visitation can be conducted through different means based on a facility's structure and elders' needs. Regardless of how visits are conducted, certain core principles and best practices should be followed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

### **Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention**

Instructional signage will be hung throughout the facility, including but not limited to proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, and other applicable facility practices.

Educational information and easy-to-read fact sheet outlining visitation will be available for visitors which include, but not limited to, proper hand washing techniques, proper use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer, respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, and visitor expectations.

Visitors, elders, or their representative should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting and necessary precautions related to COVID-19 in order to visitation with resident to occur.

The facility will follow core infection control guidelines, which may include, but not limited to, wearing a mask (covering mouth and nose), social distancing at least six feet, cleaning and disinfecting procedures, appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), effective cohorting of elders, and facility testing conducted as required.

### **TESTING, SCREENING, VISITATION**

Testing of visitors will comply with the most up to date guidance from the governors E.O., PADOH, CMS, and the CDC. While currently, the facility does not offer testing for COVID-19 prior to visitation, we encourage visitors to test on their own prior to coming to visit (e.g., within 2-3 days).

We encourage all visitors to become up to date with all recommended COVID-19 vaccines. The facility may choose to ask about visitors' vaccination status, visitors are not required to be vaccinated (or show proof of such) as a condition of visitation. If the visitor declines to disclose their vaccination status, the visitor should wear a mask at all times. This also applies to representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and protection and advocacy systems.

Visitor contact information will be gathered as a tracing tool should COVID-19 become prevalent in the facility. This information will be kept and filed for contract tracing reference.

Visitors must notify the facility, if they develop COVID-19 symptoms within 10 days of their visit.

All visitors will be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. A denial of entry may be given to those with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 10 days.

Visitors who have a positive viral test for COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or currently meet the criteria for quarantine will not be able to enter the facility until they have met the following criteria:

At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and

At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.

Visitors who are unable to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention should not be permitted to visit or should be asked to leave.

### **Outdoor Visitation**

Outdoor visits pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. Visits will be encouraged to be held outdoors whenever practicable. During outdoor visitation, all appropriate infection control and prevention practices will be followed. However, weather considerations (e.g., inclement weather, excessively hot or cold temperatures, poor air quality) or an individual elder's health status (e.g., medical condition(s), COVID-19 status), may hinder outdoor visits.

Outdoor visitation will be allowed for all elders who are not in isolation or quarantine.

### **Indoor Visitation**

Our facilities allows indoor visitation at all times and for all elders. Although there is no limit on the number of visitors a elder can have at one time, visits will be conducted in a manner that adheres to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and does not increase risk to other elders.

Visitors should go directly to the elder's room or designated visitation area.

Visitors will wear a mask and physically distance when around other elders or healthcare personnel, regardless of vaccination status, unless resident is medically exempt. All accommodation will be made to keep visitor, staff, and all elders safe.

While is it generally safest for all elders and their visitors to wear a face mask and physically distance during the visit, if elders and visitor are alone, they can choose to not wear a face mask when other elders or healthcare personnel are not present, and have close contact (including touch) with their visitor.

Large gatherings should be avoided (e.g., parties, events) where large numbers of visitors are in the same space at the same time and physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Alternative visitation will be offered to visitors of resident who are in TBP or quarantine. Visitors and residents will receive education on the potential risk of visitation and precautions necessary to facilitate visit. If the visitor and elder wish to have in person visitation the visits will occur in the elder's room.

Original: 4/2/2021

Updated: 10/13/22

The elders will wear a well-fitting facemask (if tolerated). Visitors will adhere to the core principles of infection prevention, including wearing all appropriate PPE.

### **Indoor Visitation during an Outbreak Investigation**

When a new case of COVID-19 among elders or staff is identified, a facility will immediately begin an outbreak investigation. To swiftly detect cases, we will adhere to CMS regulations and guidance for COVID-19 testing, including routine staff testing, testing of individuals with symptoms, and outbreak testing.

While it is safer for visitors not to enter the facility during an outbreak investigation, visitors will still be allowed in the facility. Visitors, elders, or their representatives will be made aware of the potential risk of visiting during an outbreak and adhere to the core principle of infection prevention.

If elders or their representative would like to have a visit during an outbreak, the visitor may be directed to wear a surgical mask or higher during visits, regardless of vaccination status, and visits will occur in the elder's room, if able. Visitor will be directed to limit movement in the facility and go directly to the elder's room.

If visitation takes place in common area, upon completion of the visit, facility staff will clean and sanitize the visiting area using EPA approved cleaning products and disposed of properly.

Compassionate care visits, and visits required under federal disability rights law, will be allowed at all times, regardless of a resident's vaccination status, the county's COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak.

Required visitation and access to the Long Term Care Ombudsman will be in accordance to current PADOH and CMS guidance.

CDC: "Up-to-Date" means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.

These core principles are consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CMS, and PADOH guidance for nursing homes, and should be adhered to at all times. The facility Administrator will be notified of any violation or variance to this policy.

Limited visitation can only be approved when the facility has met specific criteria. The administrator and the Infection Preventionist will be notified prior to any restrictions or laminations of visitation. The Regional Epidemiologist may be contacted and compliance to all regulations will be adhered to.