**Long Term Care Facilities Visitation during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Updated June 23, 2021**

**What's Changed:** Revisions in response to decreasing number of Covid-19 cases nationally and increased vaccination levels and CDC guidance including allowing children to visit.

Long Term Care Facilities Indoor Visitation during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Long-term care facilities **must** allow indoor visitations for all residents.

Visitors are recommended to be vaccinated, but vaccination is not required. Vaccination is the best way to protect residents.

Outdoor visitation in a safe and accessible space is the safest means of visitation and should continue as an option except during inclement weather. Outdoor visitation is not permitted for residents with confirmed Covid-19 infection or in quarantine.

Visitor Procedure:

1. **Screening**
   The facility must screen the visitor for COVID-19 symptoms and check their temperature. Any individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 infection (fever equal to or greater than 100.0 F, cough, headache, shortness of breath, fatigue, sore throat, myalgia, chills, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting or new-onset loss of smell or taste) will not be permitted to visit with a resident.
   
   - Facilities must maintain a screening log of visitors in case an individual becomes ill and case investigation and contact tracing are necessary.
   - Any individual who has entered the long-term care facility and subsequently develops signs and symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, headache, shortness of breath, fatigue, sore throat, myalgia, chills, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting or new onset loss of smell or taste within two days after exiting the long-term care facility, or designated outdoor space, must immediately notify the long-term care facility of the date they were in the facility, the individuals they were in contact with, and the locations within the facility they visited. Long-term care facilities should immediately screen the individuals who had contact with the visitor for the level of exposure and follow up with the facility’s medical director or resident’s care provider.
   - **Visitors who are NOT fully vaccinated are highly encouraged, but not required to be tested for Covid-19 before entry.**

2. **PPE/Precautions**
   - Visitors will be given educational material on COVID-19 signs and symptoms and infection control precautions before the visit.
   - **Signage will be posted at the community reminding visitors of the core principles of infection COVID-19 infection prevention.**
   - **Physical distancing and source control recommendations when both the patient/resident and all of their visitors are fully vaccinated:**
- While alone in the patient/resident’s room or the designated visitation room, patients/residents and their visitor(s) can choose to have close contact (including touch) and to not wear source control.
- Visitors should wear source control and physically distance from other health care personnel and other patients/residents/visitors that are not part of their group at all other times while in the facility.

**Physical distancing and source control recommendations when either the patient/resident or any of their visitors are NOT fully vaccinated:**
- The safest approach is for everyone to maintain physical distancing and to wear source control. However, if the patient/resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their unvaccinated visitor(s) while both continue to wear well-fitting source control (face coverings).

3. **Limit Movement Within the Community Care Facility**
   - Visitors should not walk around different hallways or locations within the facility.
   - The facility will take a person-centered approach in planning a safe visit within the resident's room. However, visits for residents who share a room should not be conducted in the resident's room. For situations where there is a roommate, and the health status of the resident prevents leaving the room, facilities should attempt to enable in-room visitation while adhering to the core principals of COVID-19 infection prevention.

4. **Children are allowed to visit if accompanied by an adult and are able to follow infection control procedures. Parents should weigh the risks/benefits of visitation to both the child and the resident if a child is unable to maintain appropriate infection control measures.**

5. **Visits will be allowed during scheduled visitation time and the length of the visit will not be limited. Visitation must be accommodated during evening and weekend hours.**

**Circumstances when visitation will be suspended or restricted:**
- **Residents in Quarantine:** NOTE - Unless under an approved compassionate care situation, a resident who is suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 cannot participate in a visitation. Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, cannot participate in a visitation until they have met the criteria for release from quarantine.
- Unvaccinated residents may not receive a visitation if the county positivity rate is > 10 percent and <70 percent of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated, except in Compassionate Care situations.
- When a new case of Covid-19 among residents or staff is identified, a facility should begin outbreak testing and suspend visitation (except for compassionate care visits) until at least one round of facility-wide testing is completed.
- If the first round of outbreak testing reveals no additional COVID-19 cases in other areas (e.g., units) of the facility, then visitation can resume for residents in area/units with no COVID-19 cases. However, the facility should suspend visitation on the affected until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing. Outbreak testing is discontinued when testing identifies no new cases of COVID-19 infection among staff or residents for at least 14 days since the most recent positive result.
- If the subsequent rounds of outbreak testing identify one or more additional COVID-19 cases in other areas/units of the facility, then the facility should suspend visitation for all residents (vaccinated and unvaccinated) until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing.
- In all cases requiring outbreak testing, visitors should be notified about the potential for COVID-19 exposure in the facility. This may be through signage posted regarding current outbreak.
6. Other

- Visitors who are unable or refuse to adhere to the principals of COVID-19 infection prevention should not be permitted to visit and/or should be asked to leave.
- All applicable state or local Covid-19 restrictions and guidelines will be followed.

Definitions/Clarifications

**Compassionate Care Situations**

While end-of-life situations have been used as examples of compassionate care situations, the term “compassionate care situations” does not exclusively refer to end-of-life situations.

Examples of other types of compassionate care situations include, but are not limited to:

- A resident, who was living with their family before recently being admitted to a nursing home, is struggling with the change in environment and lack of physical family support.
- A resident who is grieving after a friend or family member recently passed away.
- A resident who needs cueing and encouragement with eating or drinking, previously provided by family and/or caregiver(s), is experiencing weight loss or dehydration.
- A resident, who used to talk and interact with others, is experiencing emotional distress, seldom speaking, or crying more frequently (when the resident had rarely cried in the past).

Allowing a visit in these situations would be consistent with the intent of, “compassionate care situations.” Also, in addition to family members, compassionate care visits can be conducted by any individual that can meet the resident’s needs, such as clergy or lay persons offering religious and spiritual support. Furthermore, the above list is not an exhaustive list as there may be other compassionate care situations not included. Compassionate care visits, and visits required under federal disability rights law, should be allowed at all times, regardless of a resident’s vaccination status, the county’s COVID-19 positivity rate, or an outbreak.

**Fully Vaccinated**

Fully vaccinated refers to a person who is ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine, per the CDC’s Public Health Recommendations for Vaccinated Persons.

**References**
