

Guidance for Long-Term Care Facility Residents and Visitation

June 1, 2020

Seniors in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) have been denied visits from friends and family members for more than two months due to concerns about bringing COVID-19 infections into the LTCF. Such introductions of this virus have been deadly on a number of occasions at sites outside of Ventura County. Yet seniors, deprived of visits from their loved ones, may experience significant psychosocial harm due to isolation. The following is a Guidance for modified visitation of residents in LTCFs to maintain and enhance our seniors' quality of life. LTCFs are not required to offer visitation; allowing for visitation will be at the discretion of each LTCF.¹ Implementation of this visitation guidance in Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) must only occur while the facility remains in Phase 3 of Reopening nursing homes and Opening Up America Again as outlined in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) QSO-20-30-NH. NOTE: This three-phased approach is in reference to the [White House's Opening Up America Again Guidelines](#). It does not refer to the County of Ventura's current Stage of Reopening per [Governor Newsom's four-staged approach to reopening California](#).

Types of Appropriate Resident Interaction with Families and Friends:

- Door visits with family or friends may be arranged where the resident is inside the facility and can see their loved ones by having them stand outside the door of the facility. The door is open and the resident and family member(s) are 6 feet apart. Both resident and family member(s) or friend(s) are wearing masks.
- A facility may bring a resident outside with a mask on to spend time with visitors who are also wearing masks. Maintain 6 feet of distance between the resident and the family member(s) or friend(s). This interaction may occur outside in a courtyard, a backyard or on a porch or veranda.
- Family members or friends can drive by in a car and visit with a resident brought to the curb of the facility. A minimum of 6 feet of distance must be maintained. Both resident and family member(s) or friend(s) are wearing masks.

Alternative Methods for a Resident to Interact with Families and Friends:

- Virtual visitations via Skype, Zoom or Facetime on a tablet (iPad) or cell phone.
- Telephone calls. If calls do not go through on a resident's cell phone, the LTCF will call back to a staff member who will be asked to create a telephone connection.

Considerations for Residents Who are Bed-ridden

- Virtual visitations via Skype, Zoom or Facetime on a tablet (iPad) or cell phone.
- Telephone calls. If calls do not go through on a resident's cell phone, the LTCF will call back to a staff member who will be asked to create a telephone connection.

¹ In consultation with the Ventura County Public Health Communicable Disease office, this guidance may be suspended when a COVID-19 suspect or confirmed case is identified within a LTCF.

Guidelines for Resident Interaction with Families and Friends:

- Each facility may set its own ground rules for the visit in terms of whether an appointment is needed, length of visit and type of visit. If more than 1 visit at a time is scheduled at the facility, these should be widely separated from one another. Visitors should not enter the facility at any time during the visit. A suggested but not required time limit is 15 minutes.
- Chairs, benches, entry door/gates must be sanitized before and after each visit.
- A visitor should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and his or her temperature must be taken with a non-contact thermometer prior to the visit. No one who has any symptom associated with a COVID-19 infection or a temperature greater than 100°F may be allowed to visit the resident.
- No physical contact may occur between the resident and visitor(s) and no food, gifts, or outside items are to be exchanged between the visitor(s) and resident during the visit session. These items may be left for residents to either be sanitized by a facility staff member or let sit for 4 days before being given to the resident.
- If there is no physical barrier (e.g., a fence, a gate, a hedge, etc.) between the resident and the visitor(s), a facility staff member must monitor the visit.
- The number of visitors for each resident will be limited to 5 including small children.
- A long-term care ombudsman may visit a resident for a specific resident complaint or concern.
- Remind all visitors to screen themselves daily following a visit and to notify the facility immediately if COVID-19 symptoms arise or COVID-19 testing was acquired within 3 days following a visit.
- No extra precautions or additional monitoring needs be taken with the resident following the visit.

Robert M. Levin, MD
Health Officer