

July 14, 2020

Dear Family Members;

As you may have heard on the media, the NYSDOH has now outlined the requirements for nursing homes to allow visitation. In a notice dated 7/10/20, facilities in Phase 3 regions may resume visitation effective 7/15 under the following conditions:

The main criteria to allow visitation is THE ABSENCE OF ANY NEW ONSET OF COVID-19 AMONG RESIDENTS OR STAFF FOR A PERIOD OF 28 DAYS.
For example, if a staff or resident tests positive on July 1, visitation may resume in 28 days or July 29th, unless there are subsequent positive tests which will restart the 28-day clock.

The facility must then meet all the following requirements prior to visitation:

1. Facility has met all reporting requirements by NYSDOH (MET)
2. Facility has protocols to separate residents into cohorts of positive, negative and unknown with separate staffing, arrangement for testing staff/residents, monitoring symptoms for both residents and staff, and there is not a staffing shortage. (Met)
3. Facility has submitted a NY Forward Safety Plan to NYDOH which details the specific plan for visitation (not yet submitted)
4. Communicating the formal visitation plan with clear guidelines.

MRR has been meeting #1 and # 2 above. We are working on the Plan and will communicate the plan once we are permitted visitation based on the time frame of 28 days without a COVID + case.

When a NH meets all of the above criteria, the nursing home may resume visitation following the guidelines outlined below which must also be included in the NH's NY Forward Safety Plan.

1. Visitation should be limited to outdoor areas, weather permitting. Under certain limited circumstances, as defined by the facility, visitation can be inside, in a well-ventilated space with no more than 10 individuals who are appropriately socially distanced and wearing a facemask or face covering while in the presence of others. This may include residents visiting each other.

2. At this time, visitation is strictly prohibited in resident rooms or care areas with the exception of parents and immediate family members visiting a pediatric resident (up to age 21) on a dedicated pediatric unit/wing when such room is only occupied by the child receiving a visit. In those instances, all other requirements listed in this directive apply.
3. Specialty practitioner, podiatric, and dental services may continue. Strict adherence to infection control guidelines is required.
4. Limited visitation, including, but not limited to, family members, loved ones, representatives from the long-term care ombudsman program (LTCOP), and resident
 - a. Adequate staff are present to allow for personnel to help with the transition of residents, monitoring of visitation, and cleaning and disinfecting areas used for visitation after each visit using an EPA-approved disinfectant.
 - b. The nursing home maintains signage regarding facemask utilization and hand hygiene and uses applicable floor markings to cue social distancing delineations.
 - c. Visitors are screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to resident access and visitation will be refused if the individual(s) exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms or do not pass the screening questions. Screening shall consist of both temperature checks and asking screening questions to assess potential exposure to COVID-19 which shall include questions regarding international travel or travel to other states designated under the Commissioner's travel advisory. The facility must maintain screening questions asked onsite and make it available upon the Department's request.
 - d. Documentation of screening must be maintained onsite in an electronic format and available upon the Department's request for purposes of inspection and potential contact tracing. Documentation **must** include the following for each visitor to the nursing home:
 - i. First and last name of the visitor;
 - ii. Physical (street) address of the visitor;
 - iii. Daytime and evening telephone number;
 - iv. Date and time of visit;
 - v. Email address, if available; and
 - vi. A notation indicating the individual cleared the screening (both temperature and questions) that does not include any individual temperatures or other individual specific information.
 - e. There is adequate PPE made available by the nursing home to ensure residents wear a facemask or face covering which covers both the nose and mouth during visitation, if medically tolerated.
 - f. Visitors must wear a face mask or face covering which covers both the nose and mouth at all times when on the premises of the NH. Visitors must maintain social distancing, except when assisting with wheelchair mobility. The nursing home must have adequate supply of masks on hand for visitors and must make them available to visitors who lack an acceptable face covering.
 - g. Facilities provide alcohol-based hand rub, consisting of at least 60 percent (60%) alcohol, to residents, visitors, and representatives of the long-term care ombudsman visiting residents and those individuals are able demonstrate to appropriate use.

- h. **No more than 10 percent (10%)** of the residents shall have visitors at any one time and only two visitors will be allowed per resident at any one time. The nursing home should design and communicate visitation policies in order to comply with this requirement and schedule such visits.
 - i. Visitors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult 18 years of age or older.
 - j. Current COVID-19 positive residents, residents with COVID-19 signs or symptoms, and residents in a 14-day quarantine or observation period are not eligible for visits.
 - k. The nursing home should develop a short, easy-to-read fact sheet outlining visitor expectations including appropriate hand hygiene and face coverings. The fact sheet must be provided upon initial screening to all visitors
5. Residents may also be assisted to go outdoors with staff supervision. The appropriate infection control and safety and social distancing requirements must be maintained.
6. An interdisciplinary team must be created by the facility to review visitation program compliance with this Health Advisory.
7. If any visitor fails to adhere to the protocol, he/she/they will be prohibited from visiting for the duration of the COVID-19 state declared public health emergency.

Facilities should establish additional guidelines as needed to ensure resident and staff safety and continuity of facility operations. Hours of visitation must be clearly delineated in policy and within the visitation fact sheet. Nursing homes must continue to refrain from sending residents to non-medically necessary trips outside the nursing home until further notice. Please be reminded that communal dining and hairdresser services remain suspended at this time. Violations of this directive will result in the imposition of fines and additional enforcement remedies.

Please note that NYSDOH has issued these guidelines to restart limited visitation and has the right to restrict visitation at any point. Maria Regina is committed to meeting all regulatory requirements and has done so since March. Our most recent reported positive case of a staff member was on 7/11/2020. So, barring any additional positive results for staff or residents, the earliest we could begin visitation would be early August. We continue to follow all infection control procedures, screen all staff and providers, test all staff weekly and monitor compliance. We are doing window and “zoom” visits and hope and pray we can begin visitation again as soon as the criteria are met.

Thank you all for your patience and support. We miss you all and I will keep providing updates on re-opening visitation. Please know that the process will be slow and numbers limited but hopefully we are all moving in the right direction.

With Gratitude from all of our staff;
Brenda Burton



Administrator