

November 23, 2021

Hello families, residents and friends,

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid issued new guidance related to Visitations. It has taken a bit to get our heads and plans around implementation. We have been consulting with our local CMS staff here in NH so that we understand their expectations and interpretation. Know our focus is on facilitating and supporting visits in the safest way possible.

The Covid-19 Positivity continues to rise in NH and Hillsborough County to **more than 10%** and there are more and more outbreaks in LTC centers. It is believed to be related to waning effectiveness of the vaccines and the need to get booster shots into more seniors. **This high positivity rate - 13%+ puts us in the high level of transmission. The delta variant is very transmissible. These are some of the highest #s that we have seen throughout this pandemic. Our hospitals are full to over full.**

We are blessed that we were able to get booster shots for most of your loved ones, our residents, on Oct 8th. We had another clinic on Nov.17th to get any new admissions covered as well. We have required all staff members to be vaccinated and are encouraging those who were initially vaccinated early this year, to get their boosters. We have about 50% of our staff members with booster shots after this clinic. We are encouraging our support agency staff to get their boosters as well. We keep our fingers crossed and know our staff members have been so good in their personal lives to keep us safe.

We encourage all visitors and family to become vaccinated and receive a booster dose when available to you. Let us know if you need any information about the vaccines or boosters. We have it readily available, just ask.

The guidance we received, has us opening up our visitations. We can only safely do this with YOUR Partnership and cooperation. You no longer need to call and schedule a visit. YOU will need to be screened in and answer and sign that you have not been exposed or have any symptoms or traveled to be exposed and have your temperature taken. The front door will need to remain locked so that we can screen you in.

Our guidance says we must assure that we maintain core Principals of CV-19 infection control - **These principals apply to all Visitors.**

Core Principals of Covid-19 Infection Control:

- Visitors who have a positive test for Covid-19, symptoms of Covid-19 or those who currently meet the criteria for Quarantine, **should NOT enter the center.**
- **Hand Hygiene**
- **Face Covering, or mask (Covering mouth AND Nose)**
- **Physical distancing – at least 6 feet between people , in accordance with CDC guidelines**
- **Appropriate Staff use of PPE,** (currently requires us to mask and wear eye protection – based on the high transmission rate.)

- **Cleaning and disinfecting high- frequency touch surfaces often and designated visitation areas after each visit.**

These MUST BE Adhered to at ALL Times - If a visitor is unable to or does not adhere to these principals, we will not be able to permit a visit or will need to ask the visitor to leave.

If for any reason, a visitor can not follow our infection control principals or, screening identifies that they should not enter, Please respect our staff members, when they encourage compliance and / or don't allow entrance.

Our regular visiting hours are between 10 AM and 7 PM. Visits during meal times meal times, when our residents are gathering is not recommended since visitors are not able to socialize with other residents and visitors. Visitors are not allowed to attend group activities for the same reason.

Eating and drinking during visits is not allowed since our rooms are semi private and masks can not be removed to eat together while a roommate is present.

There are risks inherent in visiting during this **high positivity rate** within our community. We all risk exposure when we are out and about in our community. Because many of us are vaccinated, we may have mild or no symptoms at all. We still can spread this virus. Visiting risks spreading within our center to your loved one and others. Please keep this in mind when planning to visit. Assess where you have been and what risks in the community or family and friends you have been exposed to. Our seniors don't always have the resources to fight off this virus, so help keep them safe as possible.

Honestly, the safest way to visit, remains in one of our common areas when possible. **It is also best that we know when visits are planned so that options for visits can be discussed and location planned.** Especially during the upcoming holidays, we need to be able to monitor the number of visitors to assure we can social distancing can be maintained and masking stays in place.

Visits in resident rooms can compromise the social distancing and many residents struggle to keep masks in place over nose and mouth. Because our rooms are semi-private for the most part, we need to be very careful about the numbers of visitors in a room at a time. No more than 2 visitors can assure social distancing in our rooms. We may have roommates who may not wish to have visitors in their room, and we will need to honor those wishes. If you as a family member have concerns, please reach out to us directly.

Please help us work to keep things safe. You may visit in the room, only if roommate / family agree and only one resident at a time may have visitors to assure that we can facilitate the proper social distancing.

Should you have any questions, Please reach out directly. This is an evolving process.

Kindly,

**Luanne Rogers, LNHA
Administrator**

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