

Palatine Nursing Home

Outdoor and Limited Indoor Visitation During COVID-19 Pandemic

PURPOSE:

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ISSUED NURSING HOMES GUIDANCE ON MARCH 13TH THAT NURSING HOMES WERE TO LIMIT VISITATION TO MEDICALLY NECESSARY OR END OF LIFE SERVICES. ON JULY 10TH, 2020 NURSING HOMES WERE NOTIFIED THAT THE GUIDANCE WAS UPDATED TO ALLOW VISITATION FOR FACILITIES THAT HAVE BEEN WITHOUT COVID-19 FOR AT LEAST 28 DAYS. ON SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2020 THIS GUIDANCE WAS UPDATED AGAIN, AND NURSING HOMES WILL BE ALLOWED TO RESUME LIMITED VISITATION FOR FACILITIES THAT HAVE BEEN WITHOUT COVID-19 FOR AT LEAST 14 DAYS, WHICH IS A THRESHOLD SET BY THE FEDERAL CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES, IF THE FACILITY MEETS SPECIFIC BENCHMARKS AND DEVELOPS A REOPENING PLAN.

POLICY:

It is the policy of Palatine Nursing Home, pursuant to the most recent New York State Department of Health Directives updated and issued on September 15th, 2020 to permit outside visitation and limited indoor visitation/activities if/when Palatine Nursing Home meets specific benchmarks and develops a reopening plan via New York Forward Safety Plan.

PROCEDURE:

This plan will be executed pursuant to the New York State Department of Health Advisory: skilled nursing facility visitation is contingent upon Palatine Nursing Homes ability to meet conditions set forth by the NYS Department of Health. Palatine Nursing Home and the Department of Health reserve the right to restrict visitation at any point.

Palatine Nursing home may resume limited visitation and activities under this revised guidance beginning September 17, 2020 under the following conditions:

1. The NH is in full compliance with all state and federal requirements, state Executive Orders and guidance, state reporting requirements including COVID-19 focus surveys, HERDS and staff testing surveys, and federally required submission of COVID-19 data to the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).
2. The NH has completed the NY Forward Safety Plan and submitted a copy of the completed plan to covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov. The facility must retain a copy of the plan at the facility where it is easily accessible and immediately available upon request of the Department or local health department. Any changes to the plan must be immediately communicated to the Department. The plan must clearly articulate the space(s) to be used for visitation (outdoors and indoors) including the number of visitors and residents which could be safely socially distanced within the space(s). Such plan shall include attestation or compliance with all State and federal guidelines as described in number 1.

3. The NH has no staffing shortages as evidenced by the NH's individual staffing plan and as reported by the NH through submissions to the National Health Safety Network (NHSN).
4. The absence of any new onset of COVID-19 among staff or residents as reported to the Department on the HERDS and staff testing surveys and as reported to the NHSN for a period of no less than fourteen (14) days.
5. Access to adequate testing. Palatine Nursing Home should have a testing plan in place that, at a minimum, ensures that all consenting nursing home residents have received a single baseline COVID-19 test. In addition, the NH must have the capability to test, or can arrange for testing of, all residents upon identification of any individual with symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If a staff member tests positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the NH must have the capacity to continue weekly re-testing of all nursing home residents until all residents test negative.
6. An executed and operationalized arrangement with the laboratories to process SARS-CoV-2 virus tests. As recommended by CMS, the test should be able to detect SARS-CoV-2 virus (e.g., polymerase chain reaction (PCR) with greater than 95% sensitivity, greater than 90% specificity, with results obtained and rapidly reported to the nursing home.
7. Adherence to written screening protocols for all staff during each shift, each resident daily, and all persons entering the facility or grounds of such nursing home, including visitors. Resident monitoring must include daily symptom checks, vital signs, and pulse oximetry.
8. A copy of the nursing home formal visitation plan is posted to their public website and broadcasted via email or social media to provide visitors with clear guidelines for visiting and to announce if and when visitation is paused due to an increase in the number of residents and/or staff with a confirmed positive COVID-19 diagnosis.

When a nursing home meets all the above criteria, the nursing home may resume visitation following the guidelines outlined below which must also be included in the nursing home 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 and 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 room or care areas with the few exceptions such as situations in #5 below, end of life visits, and 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. Specifically, 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, representative from the long-term care ombudsman program (LTCOP), and resident advocacy organizations, will be permitted under the following conditions:
 - 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 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, including long-term care ombudsman, are screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to resident access. Additionally, the visitor must present a verified negative test result within the last week (7 days) and visitation must be refused if the individual(s) fails to present such negative test result, exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms, or does not pass screening questions. **(we may allow visitation without the presentation of a verified negative test result for a transition period until September 24, 2020.)** End of life and compassionate care visits are not subject to a verified negative test result but are subject to all other COVID-19 screening requirements.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Documentation of the screening must be maintained onsite in an electronic format and available upon the Department's request for purposes of inspection and potential contract 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.
 - f. 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.
 - g. Visitors must wear a face mask or face covering at all times when on the premises of the nursing home and maintain social distancing. The nursing

home must have adequate supply of masks on hand for visitors and make available to visitors who lack an acceptable face covering.

- h. Facilities provide alcohol-based hand rub, consisting of at least 60 percent (60%) alcohol, to residents, visitors and representatives of long term care ombudsman visiting residents and those individuals are able to demonstrate appropriate use.
 - i. No more than 10 percent (10%) of the residents shall have visitors at any 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.
 - j. Visitors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult 18 years of age or older.
 - k. 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.
 - l. 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. For residents who are bed bound continue to use alternative methods of visitation such as through videoconferencing through skype or facetime as much as possible. Limited visitation may be permitted but should adhere to the same requirements for other visitors as much as possible. Visitors should go to the patient room and not any other areas in the facility.
 6. Residents may also be assisted to go outdoors with staff supervision. The appropriate infection control and safety and social distancing requirements must be maintained.
 7. The number of visitors to the nursing home must not exceed ten percent (10%) of the resident census at any time and only two visitors will be allowed per resident at any one time.
 8. An interdisciplinary team must be created by the facility to review visitation program compliance with this Health Advisory.
 9. 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.
 10. All non-essential personnel as outlined below are subject to the same infection control requirements as staff, including but not limited to testing for COVID-19 with the same frequency as for staff; screening, wearing a mask, performing hand hygiene, maintaining social distancing:
- Allow for students enrolled in programs to become licensed, registered or certified health care professional provided the nursing home environment is appropriate to the student's education, training and experience. **Students should follow the guidelines established in their agreement between the nursing home and academic institution.**
 - Resumption of existing construction projects, and specifically, those projects directly impacting the lives of nursing home residents that were previously approved

by the Department with submission of and approval by the Department of a revised mitigation/prevention plan outlining at a minimum, testing, screening, PPE use, distance from residents, etc. **Note: Under no circumstance, will the Department allow for such resumption of a renovation or construction project(s) in or adjacent to a functioning and occupied dedicated COVID unit. Facilities should establish additional guidelines as needed to ensure resident and staff safety**