



**NURSING HOME**

**SUBJECT: NURSING HOME VISITATION POLICY**

Effective Date: July 2021

Approval:   
Administrator, Residential Healthcare Facility

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of Lewis County Residential Health Care Facility (LCGH-RHCF) to utilize NYS DOH guidelines to provide for visitation guidelines for our residents.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Outbreak:** 1 or more cases of staff or residents that test positive for COVID -19

**Transmission Based Precautions:** are for patients who are known or suspected to be infected or colonized with infectious agents, including epidemiologically important pathogens, which require additional control measures to effectively prevent transmission.

**Personal Caregiving Visitor:** means a family member, close friend or legal guardian of a resident designated by such resident, or such resident's lawful representative, to assist with personal caregiving or compassionate caregiving for the resident. Personal caregiving is defined as care and support of a resident to benefit such resident's mental, physical, or social well-being.

**Compassionate Caregiving:** personal caregiving provided in anticipation of the end of the resident's life or in the instance of significant mental, physical, or social decline or crisis.

**Fully Vaccinated:** refers to a person who is 14 days following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or 14 days following receipt of a one dose of a single-dose vaccine, per the CDC's Public Health Recommendations for Vaccinated Persons.

**PROCEDURE:**

Visitation will occur based on the following levels of visitation consistent with the facility's outbreak status.

**In-Person visits:**

**Outdoor Visitation:** Is the preferred form of visitation when residents and/or visitors are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Outdoor visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow.

**Indoor Visitation:**

- LCGH-RHCF must allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents as permitted under the regulations. LCGH-RHCF will not limit frequency or length of visits for residents, the number of visitors, or require advance scheduling of visits.

- Although there is no limit on the number of visitors that a resident can have at one time, visits should be conducted in a manner that adheres to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and does not increase risk to other residents.
  - LCGH-RHCF will ensure physical distancing can still be maintained during peak times of visitation and will avoid large gatherings when large numbers of visitors are in the same space at the same time and physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Visitors must sign in and out at the sign in book that is posted at the entrance of each unit. This is utilized for contact tracing purposes.
  - Visitors must adhere to the core principles of COVID -19 infection control- which include screening for symptoms of or exposures to COVID-19 prior to visit, appropriate PPE, 6-foot physical distancing and hand hygiene. Staff are expected to provide monitoring for those who may have difficulty adhering to these core principles. **Visitors who are unable to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention should not be permitted to visit or should be asked to leave.**
  - **Visitors who have a positive viral test for COVID 19, symptoms of COVID-19, or currently meet the criteria for quarantine should not enter the facility.**
  - **Visitors will not be required to have a COVID test, proof of a COVID test with negative result or to have been vaccinated for COVID-19; but testing is strongly encouraged and will be provided at visitor's request with appointment.**
  - Visits should occur in the resident's room. If possible, for residents who share a room, if your loved one's roommate already has a visitor, please feel free to use the visitation room that has been set up on each floor/community, or the vestibule near the elevators.
  - If resident's roommate is unvaccinated or immunocompromised (regardless of vaccination status), visits should not be conducted in resident's room.
  - Movement in the facility should be limited, including limiting visitors from walking around different halls or units of the facility. Families should remain in the resident's room until visit is over, if they need assistance, please feel free to put the call bell on and our staff will assist you.
  - If the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after.
  - **If both the resident and their visitor(s) are fully vaccinated, and the resident and visitor(s) are alone in the resident room or designated visitation room, the resident and visitor may choose to have close contact (including touch) without a mask or face covering.**

- **Unvaccinated residents may also choose to have physical touch based on their preferences and needs, such as with support persons for individuals with disabilities and visitors participating in certain religious practices – including in end-of-life situations. In these situations, unvaccinated residents (or their representatives) and their visitors should be advised of the risks of physical contact prior to the visit.**
- **Regardless, visitors should physically distance from other residents and staff in the facility.**
- **While not recommended, residents who are on transmission-based (TBP) or quarantine can still have visitors. In these cases, visits should occur in the resident's room and the resident should wear a well-fitted face mask (if tolerated). Before visiting residents, who are on TBP or quarantine, visitors should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting and precautions necessary in order to visit the resident.**

**Personal Caregiving Visitor:**

- **Is applicable during a public health emergency- at this time, there is no statewide public health emergency.**
- Each resident will designate, or their lawful representative will be able to designate and change their designation of personal caregiving visitors.
- The resident shall be entitled to designate at least 2 personal caregiving visitors.
- All personal caregiving visitors must follow infection prevention safety protocols required for nursing home staff, such as communicable disease testing, health screenings, and donning appropriate personal protective equipment.
- The facility will establish standards to determine the maximum frequency and duration of personal caregiving visits and the total number of personal caregiving visitors allowed to visit the facility at any one time.
- Require personal caregiving visitors to be trained and show competency if providing personal care such as feeding, toileting, transferring or showering a resident.
- Personal caregiving visitors will be allowed to visit residents, notwithstanding any restrictions or prohibitions relating to residential health care visitation resulting from the declared public health emergency, subject to the following restrictions:
  - a) If the facility has reasonable cause to believe that a resident will not benefit from accessing their designated personal caregiving visitors, and such reasoning has been documented in the resident's individual comprehensive plan of care.

- b) A facility may temporarily suspend or limit personal caregiving visitors to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents if : the declared public health emergency is related to a communicable disease and the Department determines that local infection rates are a level that presents the serious risk of transmission of such communicable disease within local facilities; the facility is experiencing temporary inadequate staffing and has reported such staffing shortage to the Department of Health and any other State or federal agencies as required by law, regulations, or other directive; or an acute emergency situation exists at the facility, including loss of heat, loss of elevator service, or other temporary loss of an essential service. Provided, however, that in the event a facility suspends or limits personal caregiving visitation pursuant to this clause, the facility shall notify residents, all designated personal caregiving visitors, and the applicable Department regional office of such suspension or limitation and the duration thereof within twenty-four hours of implementing the visitation suspension or limitation.
- c) A facility may prohibit a personal caregiving visitor from entering if the facility has reasonable cause to believe that permitting the personal caregiving visitor to meet with the resident is likely to pose a threat of serious physical, mental, or psychosocial harm to such resident. In the event the facility determines that denying such personal caregiving visitor access to the resident is in the resident's best interest pursuant to this subparagraph, the facility must document the date of and reason for visitation refusal in the resident's individualized comprehensive plan of care, and on the same date of the refusal the facility shall communicate its decision to the resident and their designated representative. **Further, a facility may refuse access to or remove from the premises any personal caregiving visitor who is causing or reasonably likely to cause physical injury to any facility resident or personnel.**

#### **Compassion Care Visits:**

- Can be permitted when visitation may not otherwise be permitted.
- Visitation under compassion care will not be limited to the names included in personal caregiving visitation, any family member, friend, neighbor, may visit if criteria is met.
- Visitors will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before entering facility.
- Visitors must adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection control- which include screening prior to visit, appropriate PPE, 6-foot physical distancing and hand hygiene. Staff are expected to provide monitoring for those who may have difficulty adhering to these core principles.
- Visits will occur in resident room or appropriate visitation room.
- Compassionate visits are allowed at all times.

- If a resident is severely immunocompromised the number of visitors the resident is exposed to needs to be kept to a minimum.
- Each resident will be evaluated by the medical team to identify if they qualify for compassionate care visits. A member of the interdisciplinary team will contact the primary contact of each resident to schedule a visit if they qualify. Frequency and duration of visits will be evaluated by IDCP with collaboration with the medical team.

**End of Life visit:**

- If resident is in an imminent death situation - generally the resident is expected to pass away within 24 hours an end-of-life visit would be offered.
- Visitation under compassion care will not be limited to the names included in personal caregiving visitation, any family member, friend, neighbor, may visit if criteria is met.
- Visitors will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before entering facility.
- Visitors must adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection control- which include screening prior to visit, appropriate PPE, 6-foot physical distancing and hand hygiene. Staff are expected to provide monitoring for those who may have difficulty adhering to these core principles.
- Visits will occur in resident room or appropriate visitation room.

**COVID 19 Testing**

Testing will be available by appointment only. Please call 315-376-2537 to schedule an appointment.

<b>APPROVAL</b>	1. Administrator – Residential Healthcare Facility 2. Standards Review Committee 3. Medical Bylaws and Board of Managers <b>Signed by: Administrator – Residential Healthcare Facility</b>
<b>Interdisciplinary Involvement</b>	Education as required and designated at Standards Review Commi Meetings.
<b>Created:</b>	July 2021
<b>Revised:</b>	7/22/21, 10/20/21, 11/22/21
<b>Reviewed:</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<i>Admin Shared / Policies - RHCF / Nursing Home Visitation</i>