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March 23, 2021

State Limitations on Long-Term Care Facility Visitation Lifted

Limitations in the DEM Emergency Order 20-011 related to visitation are lifted effective March 22, 2021.

Nursing homes must follow revised federal CMS visitation guidelines and core principles of infection prevention.

Assisted living facilities and other long-term care facilities must follow state and federal recommendations and industry best practices for visitation, infection prevention, and the screening and triage of everyone entering a facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

The Emergency Order provided important protections for long-term care residents who are most at-risk for serious complications from COVID-19 infections. Limiting visitation has helped keep residents safe, but restricting access to families and friends has taken a toll on the quality of life of those living in long-term care facilities. **Moving forward, all long-term care facilities should strive to help alleviate the burden caused by separation of residents from their loved ones.**

Under Governor DeSantis' leadership, Florida's vaccination efforts with long-term care facilities have provided tremendous reduction in COVID-19 cases for long-term care staff and residents – 90% declines in the last 60 days alone. Current COVID-19 long-term care cases represent less than 1% of residents and staff.

This month, the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published updated standards and guidelines recognizing the impact of vaccinations in the fight against COVID-19. By continuing to follow these standards and guidelines, long-term care residents will have more opportunities to safely connect with their families and loved ones.

CMS Visitation Guidance: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

CDC Infection Control Resources: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html

To clarify expectations for honoring resident rights, if a resident has been absent from the facility for 24 hours or more, and upon return does not pass screening criteria, the resident should be quarantined or isolated based on their circumstances consistent with state and federal guidance. However, if the resident passes screening criteria, the facility may not unnecessarily restrict the resident by requiring quarantine or isolation.

For updates about the COVID-19 vaccine administration and distribution efforts from Governor Ron DeSantis, please visit [FDOH COVID-19 Vaccines in Florida Webpage](#). The Florida Department of Health provides a daily COVID-19 vaccine report available at <https://FloridaHealthCOVID19.gov>.

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