

INFECTIOUS DISEASE/PANDEMIC EMERGENCY

SUBJECT: Visitation during Infectious Disease/Pandemic Emergency

Policy:

This facility will implement heightened surveillance activities for respiratory illness during periods of transmission in the community, an outbreak in the facility, and/or during a declared public health emergency for the illness. Visitation may be discouraged, limited, or restricted during this time in order to prevent infection or prevent transmission of communicable disease.

Definitions:

“Discouraging” visitation means the facility allows normal visitation practices (except for those individuals meeting the restricted criteria), however the facility advises individuals to defer visitation until further notice (through signage, calls, etc.).

“Limiting” visitation means the individual will not be allowed to come into the facility, except for certain situations, such as end-of-life situations or when a visitor is essential for the resident’s emotional well-being and care.

“Restricting” visitation means the individual should not be allowed in the facility at all, until they no longer meet the criteria for the illness.

Policy Explanation and Compliance Guidelines:

1. The Infection Preventionist will monitor the status of respiratory illnesses in the community, maintain communication with local and state health departments, and will keep facility leadership informed of the need for heightened surveillance activities. (*Refer to surveillance policies.*)
2. The facility will cooperate and collaborate with local and/or state health department when an outbreak is occurring in the facility with respect to visitation in the facility.
3. The current CDC guidance regarding symptoms, transmission, and exposure control will be used when establishing criteria for restricting visitation.
4. Criteria for determining to limit visitation:
 - a. There is no current outbreak in the facility, and
 - b. The facility is located in a county or adjacent county in which the illness is spreading.
 - c. Emergency Declaration Orders from state
5. Interventions when discouraging visitation:
 - a. Increase visible signage at entrances/exits regarding hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette.
 - b. Post signs and symptoms of respiratory illness and include language to encourage visitors to come back after symptoms have resolved.

6. Interventions when limiting visitation:
 - a. Provide instruction on using personal protective equipment (PPE), limiting surfaces touched, and limiting movement throughout the facility (e.g., reduce walking the halls, avoid going to dining room, etc.).
 - b. Provide necessary PPE. (If unable to provide PPE, restrict visitation.)
 - c. Screen for symptoms of illness/temperature checks upon entrance to facility
 - d. Suggest limiting physical contact with residents and others while in the facility. For example, practice social distances with no hand-shaking or hugging.
 - e. Advise any exposed visitors to monitor for signs and symptoms of respiratory illness and report to facility if evident within XX days after visiting the facility. (For example, 14 days for any signs and symptoms of COVID-19).
 - f. Modify interactions with vendors, EMS personnel, transportation providers, and other practitioners to prevent any potential transmission.

7. Offer alternatives to visitation, such as virtual communications (phone, video-communication), and be alert to psychosocial needs.

8. Keep families informed of visitation policies through website, emails, mailing and phone calls.