Dear Gurwin Residents and Family Members:

Last evening, we sent a communication to all families regarding the new NY State Department of Health (DOH) guidelines as they apply to visitation. As noted, the new guidance relaxes the 14-day COVID-free rule, which has been in place since September. While this is very good news, the guidance also notes that we must follow the core principals of infection control as mandated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This may have caused some confusion, as the DOH guidance calls for "immediate" visitation.

Because we had a positive COVID-19 test result for a staff member just yesterday, we are required to complete a full round of testing to open fully to visitation. Prior to receiving the revised guidance from DOH late Thursday, that testing was scheduled for Tuesday, March 30. Since Wednesday, we have been working to accommodate testing sooner and are pleased inform you that we are now going to be able to test all residents on Monday, March 29, and receive test results by the end of the day. Assuming all results are negative, this change in testing scheduling will, in effect, move up visitation by two days, to Tuesday, March 30, for most of our facility. The unit affected by the recent positive staff member, 2-North, will remain on quarantine for the full 14-days, and those families will be notified.

Again, please understand that the guidelines, while they may seem simple, are actually very complex, with many caveats that must be evaluated to ensure nursing homes are in compliance. It is of utmost importance that we conduct visiting in a controlled and thoughtful manner, to not only ensure compliance with all regulations, but also to ensure the safety of our residents, our staff, and our visitors.

The new DOH guidance notes that outdoor visitation is preferred; therefore, we are working to accommodate as many outdoor visits per day - for those residents who are able - as we can. Of course, our focus is on person-centered care, and each resident's needs will be assessed in relation to visiting.
Sign-ups will open Monday, March 29 at 4 pm for visits taking place Tuesday, March 30 and later. Go to bit.ly/GurwinVisits after 4 pm on Monday to schedule your visit. Further information will be available at that time and will be posted to the sign-up site.

While not mandatory, we strongly encourage all visitors to be tested within 72 hours of their visit. Vaccination is also encouraged. If you have not been vaccinated and would like to be, our in-house Pharmacy team may be able to help. Email CovidVaccine@gurwin.org for more information.

All visitors will be screened prior to being permitted to enter the building. Screening will include a temperature check, and require each visitor to answer specific questions regarding their health, exposure to COVID-19 and recent travel. Please ensure the following when you are planning your visit:

- Visitors should be in good health, with no signs of illness, including symptoms of COVID-19;
- Visitors should not have been exposed to a known case of COVID-19 within the past 14 days;
- Visitors should adhere to NY State Travel Advisory requirements, which you can view here.

The full revised DOH guidance can be found here, and is also posted on our website under the COVID-19 tab.

As a reminder, the visiting situation will remain fluid. As testing continues twice-weekly for our staff, and the community spread on Long Island hovers around 4%, we anticipate we will continue to have occasional positive cases. This may affect visiting for specific units depending on the results of contact tracing, and we appreciate your continued understanding and support as we navigate these unprecedented times together.

Please know our entire staff is anxious for visiting to begin. We know how much you’ve missed your loved ones, and how much they have missed you. We are looking forward to seeing you soon.

The Gurwin Care Team

Video Chat with your loved one: email videochat@gurwin.org to request a time. (Limit one per family per week, please.)

Send your loved one a Gurwin Gram Gram. Send a short video to us via Facebook Messenger or by email to info@gurwin.org, and we'll deliver your good wishes.