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Commissioner
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Colleagues,

As you are all aware by now, guidance and best practice protocols around COVID-19 continue to evolve. We distributed a screening protocol over a week ago for you to use to screen visitors to long term care facilities and congregate sites.

Since then, Governor Scott has issued an Executive Order which lays out prohibitions and restrictions for visitors to facilities, based on the type of facility you are. **In that Executive Order, a screening protocol is recommended for any visitors that are allowed to enter facilities or sites, to include your staff.** As cases continue to be identified here in Vermont, we are still working to slow the spread of the virus and to ensure that we can flatten the curve and avoid a surge for our health care system to ensure the best possible care and outcomes for all Vermonters.

We are well aware of the enhanced risk that this virus poses to older and vulnerable Vermonters. Based on that enhanced risk, in addition to the prohibitions laid out in the Executive Order, Governor Scott, the Vermont Department of Health and the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living are **requiring** the use of a short, screening for any visitors to long term care facilities or congregate sites.

These screening questions have been updated to be more targeted and effective for your use. If someone that you screen answers positively to **any** of these questions, visitor or staff, they should be encouraged to contact their own doctor to let them know about their symptoms or exposure and denied entry to your facility or site.

We realize that this type of screening and response could be very distressing to family members or to attendees so encourage you to frame it as a “protect yourself, protect others” effort. We hope to reinforce that messaging across multiple channels to raise awareness about the importance of prevention.

Thank you for your continued commitment to vulnerable Vermonters.

Monica Hutt, Commissioner

<https://dail.vermont.gov/novel-coronavirus-information>

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>