

**From:** Leavitt, Suzanne <[Suzanne.Leavitt@vermont.gov](mailto:Suzanne.Leavitt@vermont.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2020 11:42 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** FW: Guidance on visits from HH and Hospice staff

Hello,

As this pandemic disrupts our usual processes, we are put in a position where we have to make the best decisions for staff and residents. Please know that guidance can change from day to day. I trust you are keeping current. I recognize that we are all making the best decisions we can to provide for the safety of both staff and residents.

For now, I want to address the essential home health and hospice needs of residents in long term care facilities.

Long term care facilities have received federal and state guidance on who should be let in their buildings, and under what circumstances. I would like to be clear that medical, nursing and therapeutic staff are not visitors, but health professionals. This leads us to the next question. What constitutes an essential service? Please see below the italicized answer from CMS, and refer to the CDC site provided.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html>

Per CMS:

*I would say that if the hospice visits are “non-essential” (something like social work, chaplain), then the nursing home could prohibit the visit. But if the visit was from an “essential” provider (nursing, physician), then the nursing home should allow it, following the CDC guidance.*

It is the expectation of the Survey Agency that long term care facilities and Home Health and Hospice work together and consult together, in the best interests of your residents. Do not simply cancel services, but have a phone call. If a resident is on hospice, or wishes to be on hospice, it is their right to receive this service. Work together to provide for the residents needs whether in person, or through Skype.

I fully expect this email will garner additional questions based on additional scenarios. Please let me know what you need.

Thank you,  
Suzanne

Suzanne Leavitt, RN MS  
Director, Survey and Certification  
State Survey Agency Director  
Division of Licensing and Protection  
Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living  
(802) 241-0346

[SurveyandCertification@Vermont.gov](mailto:SurveyandCertification@Vermont.gov)

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