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Memorandum

To: Nursing Homes, Residential Care Homes, Assisted Living Residences, Therapeutic Community Residences, and ICF/IID

From: The Division of Licensing and Protection - Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

Date: June 19, 2020

Subject: Guidelines for Outdoor Visitation for Long Term Care Residential Facilities

The State of Vermont is committed to protecting residents of licensed long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living also recognizes that residents of licensed long-term care facilities have been isolated for several weeks, which can have an impact on emotional and physical wellbeing. In consultation with the Vermont Department of Health, the following guidelines have been established to assist facilities to develop their own facility-specific policies regarding outdoor visitation should the facility be prepared and staffed to allow for outdoor visitation. These guidelines align with current Executive Orders with a focus on preventing future COVID-19 outbreaks.

Facilities that offer outdoor visitation must create and follow a facility policy that includes the minimum guidelines listed below; facilities may choose to implement visitation policies with more strict criteria. If a visitor is unable or unwilling to follow the policy of the facility regarding outdoor visits, visits may be suspended until adequate supervision or education can be offered and the standards followed.

Facilities are encouraged to continue to utilize creative strategies to encourage connection with families during this time to include telephone visits, video visits and calls, and other measures to combat isolation among residents and address families' desire for communication and contact.

These guidelines do not replace or change the current visitation guidelines which allow for compassionate care/end of life visitation for any resident for whom that is deemed necessary as per the Governor's original Executive Order. Those guidelines are listed in the Executive Order linked below.

<https://governor.vermont.gov/sites/scott/files/documents/EO%2001-20%20Declaration%20of%20State%20of%20Emergency%20in%20Response%20to%20COVID-19%20and%20National%20Guard%20Call-Out.pdf>

1. Facilities must ensure the following procedures are followed:
 - i. Visitations must be arranged in advance and scheduled with the facility;
 - ii. Visitors are screened for symptoms of COVID-19 immediately prior to any visitation with staff or residents of a facility. Those with symptoms must be excluded from visitation;
 - iii. Limits parties of visitors to no more than two persons;
 - iv. Each resident may only receive scheduled visitors once per day; and
 - v. All visitations must be documented and tracked, including maintaining a log of times and dates of all visitors, and their contact information.
2. Facilities must adopt policies to ensure compliance with the Governor's current relevant Executive Orders regarding out-of-state visitors to Vermont who intend to visit a resident.
3. Visitors (with the exception of children 2 years old or younger) shall be required to wear facemasks or cloth face coverings at all times during the visit. Facilities will require that visitors provide their own facemasks to utilize during the visit.
 - i. Residents will also be encouraged to wear facemasks or cloth face coverings during visits if they can tolerate them.
4. Facilities shall provide visitors with an alcohol-based hand rub/hand sanitizer prior to interaction with any staff members or residents.
5. The facilities will provide staff supervision as needed to ensure social distancing of at least six feet between people, and that other infection prevention measures are maintained at all times during the visit.
 - i. Facilities will develop and provide advance notice about facility-specific policies and procedures for safe visitation to scheduled visitors.
6. Physical contact between the visitor(s) and residents, including the passing of items directly to the resident and vice versa, is prohibited.
 - i. Any gifts or items to be delivered to the resident shall be handled per the facility policy for receiving and sanitizing items.
7. Facilities may limit times, dates, and lengths of stays by visitors based on available resources to ensure the proper care and safety of staff and patients.
8. Homes may place physical barriers or visual reminders/signage to ensure proper distancing during visits.

9. The same visitation approach, outlined above, may be used for allowing residents to visit with other residents, outdoors and up to 3 residents at a time.
10. Visitation for residents under quarantine due to being a new admission, recovering from a hospital stay, or for any other reason should not be scheduled for visits until that quarantine period is successfully completed.