



Long Term Care and Congregate Residential Settings Visitor Guidance November 23, 2021

Guiding Principles:

- Response to the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly evolving based on available information and local, national, and international disease activity.
- Vaccinations including booster doses are strongly recommended for all eligible individuals.
- With high community transmission of COVID-19 defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as 100 or more cases per 100,000 persons in Winnebago County, mitigations must be implemented to protect the health and safety of residents, staff, and family members.
- Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) recognizes that physical separation from family and other loved ones has taken a physical and emotional toll on residents and their loved ones.
- Winnebago County Health Department has developed these guidelines to assist Long-term Care (LTC)/Congregate Care (CC) facilities to mitigate and prevent COVID -19 in their settings while supporting visitation and socialization.

Visitor Guidance:

- Visitors should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting during an outbreak investigation.
 - Post the status of COVID-19 in the facility including the number of positive cases and the overall county transmission rate at visitor check-in stations.
 - Share the status of COVID-19 cases on social media outlets used to communicate with family members.
- Family members should avoid visiting if they have sign/symptoms of illness or if they have been exposed regardless of vaccination status.
- Screen visitors upon entering the facility for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 illness. Consider antigen testing for visitors who are not vaccinated if supplies and staffing resources permit.
- Remind visitors that they must go directly to the designated visit space or resident's room. Visitors should not roam throughout the facility.
- Visits should be conducted in a manner that adheres to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and does not increase risk to other residents following both Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and Illinois Department of Public (IDPH). Guidance from IDPH can be found at <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/long-term-care.html>.
- Masking is required for all visitors when in the facility including hallways and private rooms. Masks must cover the nose and mouth.
- Visits can occur in different locations to protect the resident, roommates, and others in the facility including:
 - Resident's room
 - If a resident's roommate is at high risk for COVID-19 due to being immunocompromised, visits should not be conducted in the resident's room.



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- Dedicated visitation space
- Outdoors when conditions permit
- Virtual visits such as Face-time, Zoom, Webex, Skype, and other
- Consider safer visitation options such as virtual, outdoors, or window visits for unvaccinated visitors including children under the age of 5 years who are not eligible for vaccination.
- Encourage scheduling to ensure that physical/social distancing can be maintained for all visitors.
- Encourage families to schedule amongst themselves their visiting times to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained during their visit.
- For situations where there is a roommate and the health status of the resident prevents leaving the room, facilities should attempt to enable in-room visitation while adhering to the core principles of infection prevention.

References

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Nursing Home Visitation

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/gso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

Illinois Department of Public Health Long Term Care Facilities Guidance

<https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/long-term-care.html>

Illinois Executive and Administrative Orders

<https://www.illinois.gov/government/executive-orders.html>