


Wilkinson RHCf 	Policy: COVID-19 Visitation Guidance	
	Section:	Code #

Approved: Todd Zbytniewski NHA	Effective Date: 7/20
<i>Signature:</i>	Original: 7/20
	Revised : 9/18/20, 9/22/20, 2/25/21, 3/4/21, 3/31/21,5/2021

Policy Statement:

COVID-19 has been detected in multiple communities around New York State. Visitors may introduce COVID-19 infection into the Nursing Home. The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is issuing the following guidance regarding visitors to Nursing Homes and other precautions and procedures Nursing Homes must take to protect and maintain the health and safety of their residents and staff during the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

I. Purpose:

It is the goal of Wilkinson to facilitate person-centered visitation, while considering the residents physical, mental and psychosocial well-being while supporting their quality of life. Wilkinson will assure resident visitation policies and procedures are consistent with the NYSDOH guidance and aligns with CMS and CDC guidelines.


II. Guidance:

The NYSDOH and CMS guidance provides specific criteria that Wilkinson will follow regarding general nursing home visitation and will ensure visitation for family members, loved ones, representatives from the long-term care ombudsman program (LTCOP), and resident advocacy organizations. This policy does not change the guidance previously issued relative to visitation for Compassionate Care or end-of life.

The specific criteria which is required for visitation is described below:

1. Full compliance with both state and federal reporting requirements including COVID-19 focus surveys, daily HERDS, weekly staff testing surveys, and the federally required weekly submission of COVID-19 data to the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).
2. Wilkinson will retain a copy of the revised facility’s visitation plan at the facility where it is easily accessible and immediately available upon request of the Department of Health. The plan will clearly articulate the space(s) to be used for visitation (outdoors and indoors) including the number of visitors and residents that could be safely socially distanced within the space(s). The plan will reference relevant infection control policies for visitors. A copy of the facilities visitation plan will be posted on the facility’s website and communicated via email to provide visitors with clear guidelines for visiting.
3. Wilkinson will allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents (regardless of vaccination status), except for a few circumstances when visitation should be limited due to a high risk of COVID-19 transmission (exception - compassionate care visits/end of life visits should be permitted at all times). The following scenarios include limiting indoor visitation for:
 - Unvaccinated residents if Wilkinson COVID-19 count positivity rate is >10% **AND** >70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated;
 - Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they

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- have met the criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions; OR
- Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine

Indoor Visitation During an Outbreak

An outbreak exists when a new nursing home onset of COVID-19 occurs (i.e., a new COVID-19 case among residents or staff). Visitation can still occur when there is an outbreak, but there is evidence that the transmission of COVID-19 is contained to a single area (e.g., unit) of the facility.

When a new COVID-19 case among residents or staff is identified, the facility shall begin outbreak testing and suspend all indoor visitation until at least one round of facility-wide testing is completed. Visitation will resume based on the following criteria:

- If the first round of outbreak testing reveals no additional COVID-19 cases in other areas (e.g., units) of the facility, then visitation can resume for residents in units with no COVID-19 cases. Visitation will be suspended on the affected units until criteria is met to discontinue outbreak testing.
- If the first round of outbreak testing reveals one or more additional COVID-19 cases in other areas/units of the facility (e.g., new cases in two or more units), then visitation shall be suspended for all residents until criteria is met to discontinue outbreak testing.

Potential Visit Related Exposure


If a visitor tests positive and the visit to the nursing home occurred from two days before the visitor’s symptoms onset, to the end of the visitor’s isolation period, there is a potential for exposure. Exposures among visitors and residents shall be evaluated using community contact tracing guidelines.

The following will be evaluated to determine the appropriate follow-up when there is identification of a visitor who tests positive for COVID-19. If the following are confirmed;

- the visit was supervised by an appropriate facility staff member; and
- the visit was conducted in a common area or outdoor area that does not require the visitor to enter a resident unit; and
- the visitor complied with all COVID-19 precautions including including hand hygiene and appropriate use of face mask
- the visitor and the resident maintained at least 6 feet of distance from each other for the entire duration of the visit; and
- the visitor maintained at least 6 feet of distance from all other visitors, residents, and staff for the entire duration of the visit

If all of the above are confirmed, the resident who received the visit shall be placed on a 14-day quarantine in a single room in the designated observation area using contact plus droplet precautions. The resident shall be

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monitored per facility protocol.


If all of the above cannot be confirmed by the facility, protocols shall be followed similar to the identification of a COVID-19 positive staff member, including contact tracing to determine the extent of the exposure within the facility. On affected units (or the entire facility depending on the amount of contact), the facility shall initiate testing every 3-7 days until testing identifies no new cases among staff or residents for a period of at least 14 days.

4. Adherence to written screening protocols for all staff during each shift, each resident daily, and all persons entering the facility or grounds of the nursing home, including visitors, vendors, students and volunteers.
5. Visitors must be able to adhere to the core principles including infection prevention and control policies, and staff must provide monitoring for those who may have difficulty adhering to core principles, such as children.
6. Current COVID-19 positive residents, residents with COVID-19 signs or symptoms, and residents in a 14-day quarantine or observation period remain ineligible for in-person visits. In these instances, every effort will be made to accommodate visits using electronic devices and alternative visitation techniques.
7. Wilkinson will limit movement in the facility. For example, visitors should not walk around different halls of the facility. Rather, they should go directly to the resident’s room or sun porch. Visits for residents who share a room **will not** be conducted in the resident’s room. For situations where there is a roommate and the health status of the resident prevents leaving the room, Wilkinson will attempt to enable in-room visitation while adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention.
8. Visitors must abide by the NYS Dept of Health COVID-19 Travel Advisory Guidelines.
9. While taking a person-centered approach and adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, when possible, outdoor visitation shall be conducted in a manner that reduces the risk of transmission. Outdoor visits pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. Therefore, all visits should be held outdoors whenever practicable. Aside from weather considerations (e.g., inclement weather, excessively hot or cold temperatures, poor air quality), an individual resident’s health status (e.g., medical condition(s), COVID-19 status), or a facility’s outbreak status, outdoor visitation should be facilitated routinely.

In addition, Wilkinson will follow the guidelines outlined below:

- Adequate staff present to allow for personnel to help with the transition of residents, monitoring of visitation, and cleaning and disinfecting of areas used for visitation after each visit using an EPA-approved disinfectant.

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- Appropriate signage and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions including use of facemask or face covering utilization and hand hygiene, and applicable floor markings to cue social distancing delineations will be in place during outdoor visitation and indoor visitation if conducive to the environment.
- Adequate PPE shall be made available by the nursing home to ensure residents wear a face mask if medically able to utilize a face covering during visitation. Visitors must wear a face mask or face covering at all times when on the premises of the nursing home and maintain social distancing. If the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand hygiene before and after.
- The nursing home shall have an adequate supply of masks on hand for visitors and make available to visitors who lack an acceptable face covering.
- Wilkinson shall provide alcohol-based hand rub to visitors.

III. Procedure:

1. Visitation will occur in an outside area on the facility campus, weather permitting. If weather not permitting, visitation will occur at Wilkinson in resident rooms or nursing unit sun porch.
2. Visitation can be scheduled by contacting Donna Panaro. She may be reached by email or telephone: donna.rougeux@nysmha.org or 518-332-8421
3. All visitors will be screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Visitation will be refused if the individual(s) exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms, or they do not pass the screening process. Screening shall consist of temperature checks and screening questions.
4. Visitors are not required to be tested for COVID-19 before they visit.
5. The screener will obtain the following information and enter into the screening log.
 - i. First and last name of the visitor;
 - ii. Physical (street) address of the visitor;
 - iii. Telephone number;
 - iv. Date and time of visit; and
 - v. Email address if available

NOTE: The aforementioned information will be stored electronically. Additional information will be requested from each visitor each time a rapid test is conducted.

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6. Once the visitation requirements have been met the following will occur:
- A copy of the facility visitation guidelines will be provided to each visitor at their initial visit, upon revision and upon request anytime thereafter.
 - Wilkinson will issue a face mask to each visitor if the visitor is unable to provide their own mask. Visitors must wear a mask the entire time they are in the facility. If the mask becomes wet or soiled, visitors may ask staff for a new mask.
 - A visitor sticker will be provided to each visitor and worn at all times while in the nursing home.
 - Wilkinson will allow 3 visitors per resident at one time.
 - Visitors must practice social distancing. Visitors are to maintain a distance of 6 feet from the resident and others. If the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand hygiene before and after.
 - Hand sanitizer will be utilized prior to entering the resident room/sun porch and upon exiting.
 - Visitation is restricted to the resident room or sun porch. Visitors may not leave the resident room/sun porch during the resident visit for the entire visit and are not to visit other areas of the facility.
 - Staff will be available to assist with the transition of residents as needed during the visit and to monitor visitation.
 - The area where the visit occurred will be sanitized utilizing an EPA-approved disinfectant after the completion of the visit.
 - Visitation Hours are as follows: 9:00am-12:00pm, 1:00pm to 5:00pm and from 6:30pm-8:00pm Sunday through Saturday.
7. If any visitor fails to adhere to the protocol, he/she/they may be prohibited from visiting for the duration of the COVID-19 state declared public health emergency.

End of Life and Compassionate Care Visits

Terminally ill and/or compassionate care visits must follow the aforementioned visitation guidance. Reasoning for compassionate care visits may include:

- Newly admitted residents with difficulty adjusting to the facility environment and lack of in-person family support.
- Residents recently grieving the loss of a friend or loved one.
- Residents who previously received in-person support and/or cuing from family for eating and drinking and are now experiencing dehydration and/or weight loss.
- Residents who are exhibiting signs and symptoms of emotional distress including, but not limited to, seldom speaking or crying more frequently (when the resident had rarely cried in the past), refusing to participate in an activity or activities, staying in bed longer than usual, or exhibiting behavior considered abnormal for the individual.

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- Residents who receive religious or spiritual support from clergy or another layperson.

The situations above are not intended to be an exhaustive list. Additional compassionate care situations may be considered by the facility on a resident-specific basis.

For End of Life and Compassionate Care Visits the following will occur:

- Administration will authorize visitation.
- The screener is to be notified and provided the names of approved visitors, as well as the location and name of the resident being visited. This information will be added to the “Approved Visitor Log”.
- Family members as well as clergy and lay persons offering religious and spiritual support will be allowed to visit. Name and contact information for visitors, the date(s) of their visits, and the name of the resident visited are maintained by the facility. Visitors under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult 18 years of age or older.
- 3 visitors may visit at one time Visitors will be given a visitor sticker with room number noted.

IV. References

July 10, 2020 - New York State Department of Health Nursing Home Advisory: Skilled Nursing Facility Visitation.

September 17, 2020-New York State Department of Health Nursing Home Advisory: Skilled Nursing Facility Visitation.

February 23, 2021- DOH “Health Advisory: Revised Skilled Nursing Facility Visitation”

March 25, 2021- DOH “Health Advisory: Revised Skilled Nursing Facility Visitation”

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