



February 10, 2021

Dear Residents and Families,

LeadingAge, our national association, issued an excellent communication regarding the vaccine and what we can and can't do at this time. I have attached this letter for your review. It reiterates many of the points previously shared, but it is good to have it in one document.

I am pleased to share two exciting changes for our retirement communities. Within the current CMS guidelines, we can have limited dining in the dining rooms and adjust our wellness programs' capacity.

Beginning on Monday, February 22, the Deupree House and Marjorie Lee Archea Dining Rooms will be open for limited seating. The dining staff will share details for reserving tables closer to the start date. The other dining rooms at MPL will be available shortly after the 22nd.

Our wellness team has adjusted the guidelines to increase the number of people who can use the Fitness Zone and Pool at the same time. **Effective immediately, we can accommodate four residents in the DH Fitness Zone and three residents in the MPL Fitness Zone. Both pools can have six people in the area at a time.** Residents must maintain six feet of social distance at all times. Additionally, residents must have one piece of equipment between the resident and their workout neighbor and follow the guidelines for masks and cleaning off the equipment after use. As a reminder, the locker rooms at both Fitness Zones remain closed at this time.

In a time when the answer seems like it always "no or we don't know," it is great to share what we CAN do!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura R Lamb". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Laura Lamb
President & CEO



As you know, nursing homes have been under a great deal of public scrutiny throughout this pandemic. As the months tick by, the social isolation caused by visitor restrictions has become a crisis. However, visitor restrictions depend largely upon how well our communities, states, and nation manage this virus.

Many of our members are now facing questions from residents and families about when visitor restrictions will be lifted. Particularly as more residents and staff are vaccinated against COVID-19, there is more impatience with the restrictions. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) continues to review COVID-19 data, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), but will not be revising visitation guidance at this time.

With this in mind, remember that current guidance does allow for outdoor visitation, and for indoor visitation if certain criteria are met. However, the status of visitation depends in part upon the status of COVID-19 in the surrounding community.

We have created this fact sheet for LeadingAge members to use in educating residents, families, and the surrounding community on what they can do to help the nursing home get back to visitation.

It will take all of us working together to put an end to this pandemic, and this fact sheet can help.



Five Facts About Visitor Restrictions in Nursing Homes

1. **The federal government issues nursing home visitation restrictions.** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) restricted visitation in March 2020. Restrictions were [revised](#) in September 2020 to allow some flexibility within strict parameters.
2. **Visitor restrictions apply to everyone.** Those who are vaccinated, those who are considered “essential caregivers”, and those who have recovered from COVID-19 all must follow the same visitor restrictions.
3. **Outdoor visitation is the CMS-preferred method of visitation.** CMS prefers that permitted visitation occur outdoors if possible. The nursing home may be able to access Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) funds from the state to purchase items to facilitate outdoor visitation in winter weather.
4. **Outdoor visitation can take place under most circumstances.** Unless a nursing home is experiencing a significant outbreak affecting large numbers of residents and/or staff, outdoor visitation is permitted.
5. **Indoor visitation is 100% impacted by how well the surrounding community manages COVID-19.** If the surrounding community shows a [county positivity rate](#) of 10% or greater, indoor visitation is restricted. Indoor visitation is also restricted if the nursing home is experiencing an outbreak, and outbreaks in the nursing home are [tied to high rates of COVID-19 in the community](#).

Five Things You Can Do to Help Nursing Home Visitation Resume

1. **Wear a mask.** Wear a mask any time you leave your house, even if you’re social distancing from others. Masks should cover the mouth and nose.
2. **Social distance and avoid crowds.** Stay at least 2 arms’-length (6 feet) away from anyone who does not live in your household. Avoid gatherings of people who don’t live in your household, especially indoor gatherings. Stay connected by phone or online platforms.

3. **Stay home if you're sick.** Even if you think it's just a cold or just the flu, stay home. Don't go to work, don't go to your place of worship, don't even go to the grocery store. Don't accept visitors either. Call your doctor and get a COVID-19 test if the doctor recommends it.
4. **Get vaccinated when it's your turn.** As more people get vaccinated, fewer people get sick. That leads to fewer cases, fewer deaths, and less opportunity for the virus to mutate into other variants.
5. **Spread the word, not the virus.** Educate others on the steps above and why it is important for us all to do our part. This virus is everyone's problem and we all have a responsibility in the solution.

For more information on COVID-19 and how to protect yourself and others, go to:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>