

Policy: Visitation

Departments: All

### **POLICY**

It is the policy of Brookhaven Rehabilitation and Health Care Center to promote and support visitation for residents, families and resident representatives while ensuring safety and adherence to infection prevention strategies to minimize any potential spread of infection. This will be done in accordance with all State and Federal guidance for the prevention of COVID-19.

### **PURPOSE**

To enhance resident quality of life by implementing visitation and activities to combat psychological impacts of isolation from family and representatives.

### **NYSDOH CRITERIA**

Visitation is allowed for all residents at all times. The following Core Principles of Covid-19 Infection Prevention should be adhered to at all times.

- Visitors who have a positive viral test for Covid-19, symptoms of Covid-19, or currently meet the criteria for quarantine, should not enter the facility. Facilities should screen all who enter for these visitation exclusions.
- Hand hygiene (use of alcohol based hand rub is preferred).
- Face covering or mask (covering mouth and nose) and physical distancing at least six feet between people, in accordance with CDC guidance.
- Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on Covid-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices (e.g., use of face covering or mask, specified entries, exits and routes to designated areas, hand hygiene).
- Cleaning and disinfecting high frequency touched surfaces in the facility often, and designated visitation areas after each visit.
- Appropriate staff use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Effective cohorting of residents (e.g., separate areas dedicated to Covid-19 care).
- Resident and staff testing conducted as required as 42 CFR 483.80(h) (see QSO-20-38- NH REVISED) as referenced in NH-DAL 21-23 issued October 27, 2021.

### **PROCEDURE**

- The facility will conduct visitation at all times and/or activities while following NYSDOH and Federal guidance.
- Facility visitation can be conducted through a variety of means:
  - a. In resident rooms
  - b. Dedicated visitation spaces
  - c. Outdoors

- Indoor visitation is permitted at all times for all residents.
  - a. The first floor Main Dining Room is the preferred location for indoor visitation.
  - b. The Main Dining Room will have indicators and signage in place for appropriate physical distancing and alcohol based hand rub and disinfectant spray will be readily available at all times.
  - c. During in room visits, if a resident's roommate is unvaccinated or immunocompromised (regardless of vaccine status) visits should not be conducted in the resident's room, if possible. For situations where there is a roommate and the health status of the resident prevents leaving the room, in room visitation will be enabled while adhering to the core principles of infection prevention.
  
- Outdoor visitation is preferred when the resident and/or visitor are not fully vaccinated.
  - a. When weather permits, the designated outdoor visitation space is the patio.
  - b. The patio will have indicators/signage in place for appropriate physical distancing and alcohol based hand rub and disinfectant spray will be readily available at all times.

If the county Covid-19 level of community transmission is Substantial to High:

- a. All Residents and Visitors, regardless of vaccine status, should wear face coverings or masks and physically distance at all times.

If the county Covid-19 level of community transmission is Low to Moderate:

- a. The safest practice is for residents and visitors to wear face coverings or masks and physically distance, particularly if either of them is at an increased risk for severe disease or are unvaccinated.
- b. If the resident and all their visitors are all fully vaccinated and the resident is not moderately or severely immunocompromised, they may choose to not wear face coverings or masks and to have physical contact.

Visitors should wear face coverings or masks when around other residents or healthcare personnel, regardless of vaccination status. Face masks will be provided to visitors by the facility as needed.

The county level of community transmission will be posted on the entrance doors of the facility and in the facility lobby.

Visitation with residents on transmission based precautions (TBP) or quarantine may still receive visitors though it is not recommended.

- a. Visits will occur in the residents room.
- b. The resident will wear a well fitted face mask (if tolerated).
- c. Visitors to residents in TBP or quarantine will be made aware of the potential risk of visiting and precautions necessary to visit the resident.
- d. Visitors should adhere to the core principals of infection prevention.
- e. The facility will provide appropriate PPE to visitors of residents on TBP or quarantine.

## **INDOOR VISITATION DURING AN OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION**

When a new case of Covid-19 among residents or staff is identified, the facility will immediately begin outbreak testing in accordance with CMS QSO 20-38-NH REVISED and CDC guidelines. (see BRHCC Staff and Resident testing policies).

- While it is safer for visitors to not enter the facility during an outbreak investigation, visitors must still be allowed in the facility.
- Visitors will be made aware of the potential risk of visiting during an outbreak investigation and should adhere to the core principles of infection prevention.
- Residents/visitors that would like to have a visit during an outbreak investigation should wear face masks or covering regardless of vaccine status.
- Visits should ideally occur in resident rooms.

### Testing Summary:

Testing Trigger	Staff	Residents
Symptomatic individual identified	Staff, vaccinated and unvaccinated, with signs or symptoms must be tested	Residents, vaccinated and unvaccinated with signs or symptoms must be tested
Newly identified Covid-19 positive staff or resident in a facility that can identify close contacts	Test all staff, vaccinated and unvaccinated, that had a higher risk exposure with a Covid-19 positive individual	Test all residents, vaccinated and unvaccinated, that had a higher risk exposure with a Covid-19 positive individual
Newly identified Covid-19 positive staff or resident in a facility that is unable to identify close contacts	Test all staff vaccinated and unvaccinated, facility wide or at a group level if staff are assigned to a specific location where the new case occurred (e.g., unit, floor, or other specific area(s) of the facility)	Test all residents, vaccinated and unvaccinated, facility wide or at a group level (e.g., unit, floor or other specific area(s) of the facility)
Routine Testing	According to Table 2	Not generally recommended

Level of Covid-19 Community Transmission	Minimum Testing Frequency of Unvaccinated Staff
Low (blue)	Not recommended
Moderate (yellow)	Once a week
Substantial (orange)	Twice a week
High (red)	Twice a week

Vaccinated staff do not need to be routinely tested.

### **Visitor Testing and Vaccination**

- Testing/proof of a negative test is NOT required for visitation.
- The facility encourages visitors to be tested at least 3 days prior to visiting and the facility will offer rapid testing to all consenting visitors as able.
- Visitors are not required to be vaccinated (or show proof of such) as a condition of visitation.

- The facility may ask about vaccine status, if a visitor declines to disclose their vaccine status, they should wear a face covering or mask at all times.

### **Compassionate Care Visits**

- Compassionate care visits are allowed at all times.

### **Required Visitation**

- Visitation shall not be restricted without a reasonable clinical or safety cause, consistent with 42 CFR 483.10(f)(4)(v).

### **Access to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman**

- Representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman will be provided immediate access to any resident.
- If an Ombudsman is planning to visit a resident who is on TBP or quarantine, or an unvaccinated resident when the county level of community transmission is substantial or high in the past 7 days, the resident and ombudsman should be made aware of the risk of visiting and the visit should take place in the resident's room.
- Ombudsmen should adhere to the core principles of Covid-19 infection prevention.
- If the resident or Ombudsman program requests alternative communication in lieu of an in person visit, the facility will assist in coordinating a phone call, video call or zoom conference.

### **Federal Disability Rights Law and Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Programs**

- 42 CFR 483.10(f)(4)(i) and (F) requires the facility to allow immediate access to a resident by any representative of the protection and advocacy systems.
- If the P&A is planning to visit a resident on TBP or quarantine, or an unvaccinated resident when the county level of transmission is substantial or high in the past 7 days, the resident and the P&A representative should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting and the visit should take place in the resident's room.
- The facility must comply with federal disability rights laws.
- When communicating with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing it is recommended to use a clear mask or mask with a clear panel.
- Face coverings should not be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to wear a mask due to a disability, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- If a resident requires assistance to ensure effective communication and assistance is not available by onsite staff or effective communication cannot be provided without such entry, the facility must allow the individual entry into the nursing home to interpret or facilitate, with some exceptions. The facility will require such individuals to adhere to the core principles of Covid-19 infection prevention.

### **ENTRY OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND OTHER PROVIDERS OF SERVICES**

- All healthcare workers must be permitted to come into the facility as long as they are not subject to a work exclusion or showing signs/symptoms of Covid-19.
- Personnel educating and assisting in resident transitions to the community should be permitted entry consistent with guidance.

- EMS personnel do not need to be screened so they can attend to an emergency without delay.
- All staff, including individuals providing services under arrangement as well as volunteers, should adhere to the core principles of Covid-19 infection prevention and must comply with Covid-19 testing requirements.

### **COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES, DINING AND RESIDENT OUTINGS**

While adhering to the core principles of Covid-19 infection prevention, communal activities and dining may occur. Book clubs, crafts, movies, exercise and Bingo are all activities that may be facilitated with alterations to adhere to the guidelines for preventing transmission.

- For the safety of all residents it is recommended that all residents, regardless of vaccination status to wear a face covering or mask while in communal areas of the facility.
- Staff will encourage all residents on the use of face mask (unless eating), physical distancing and frequent hand hygiene.
- Residents who are on TBP or quarantine will be provided 1:1 activities and will be provided meals in their room.
- Residents are permitted to leave the facility as they choose in accordance with their out on pass (OOP) order.
- Residents that choose to go OOP will be provided with a face mask and they and any individual accompanying them will be reminded to adhere to all recommended infection prevention practices while out of the facility.
- Upon the residents return to the facility the following actions will be taken:
  - The resident will be screened for signs/symptoms of Covid-19.
  - If the resident or family reports possible close contact with an individual with Covid-19 while outside the facility, the resident will be tested for Covid-19 regardless of vaccination status and will be placed on quarantine if not fully vaccinated.
  - If the resident develops signs or symptoms of Covid-19 after an outing, the resident will be placed on TMP and tested for Covid-19 regardless of vaccination status.
  - Unvaccinated residents who leave the facility for more than 24 hours will be tested upon return to the facility and may be placed on TBP or quarantined as determined by the clinical team.
  - Residents will be monitored for signs and symptoms of Covid-19 daily.

### **Survey Considerations**

The facility is not permitted to restrict access to surveyors based on vaccination status, nor ask a surveyor to for proof of vaccination status as a condition of entry.

Surveyors should not enter the facility if:

- a. They have a positive viral test for Covid-19.
- b. They have signs or symptoms of Covid-19.
- c. They meet the criteria or quarantine.

Surveyors should adhere to the core principles of Covid-19 infection prevention and adhere to any Covid-19 infection prevention requirements set by federal and state agencies, including Executive Orders.