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## **Long Term Care Provider Associations Urge Limiting Visitor Access to Nursing Homes and Assisted Living**

SAINT PAUL, MN – (March 11, 2020) -- LeadingAge Minnesota and Care Providers of Minnesota today advised nursing homes and assisted living providers to take action immediately to restrict visitor access to only essential visits. These recommendations build on the latest guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

All visitors -- including family members, contractors, and volunteers -- are being asked to temporarily avoid visiting nursing homes and assisted living settings except for essential circumstances. For those limiting their visits, providers will work to ensure that loved ones can communicate with residents by using video chat, calling, texting, or checking in on social media. They will also provide families with regular updates on the status of their operations.

“We know that family members and friends want to be with their loved ones, but the current COVID-19 outbreak requires us to make every reasonable effort to protect our residents and staff,” explained Patti Cullen, CEO of Care Providers of Minnesota. “We hope that a more cautious approach will be effective and temporary.”

“While information about COVID-19 is evolving, we already know that older people and those living in congregate settings like nursing homes are at greatest risk for the most serious infections associated with COVID-19,” said Gayle Kvenvold, CEO of LeadingAge Minnesota. “We believe that aggressive steps focused on prevention are the best way of reducing the risk of the type of outbreak that occurred in Washington State.”

Both organizations and their members have undertaken extensive planning since learning of the COVID-19 outbreak, including additional training for employees and preparing strategies in case contagion occurs.

“We know that these additional recommendations may be hard for residents and their families and disruptive to their normal routines” said Kvenvold. “However, we believe we can help save lives and reduce severe illnesses by taking these steps today.”

“Our organizations will continue to coordinate with the Minnesota Department of Health and other experts,” concluded Cullen. “If we believe that additional steps must be taken, we will move swiftly to protect residents and staff from this virus.”

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