

Long-term Care Guidance Under Executive Order 20-99

INFORMATION FOR FACILITIES, RESIDENTS, AND RESIDENT FAMILIES AND REPRESENTATIVES

11/24/2020

Governor Tim Walz recently issued an executive order prohibiting social gatherings and restricting many business activities due to unprecedented surges in the number of people throughout the state infected with COVID-19. To protect long-term care residents and staff, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is issuing this guidance in response to Emergency Executive Order 20-99, effective from 11:59 p.m. Nov. 20 through 11:59 p.m. Dec. 18, 2020.

- [Emergency Executive Order 20-99 Implementing a Four Week Dial Back on Certain Activities to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 \(https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-99%20Final%20%28003%29_tcm1055-454294.pdf\)](https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-99%20Final%20%28003%29_tcm1055-454294.pdf)
- CDC and MDH recommend that people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 avoid in-person gatherings with anyone who does not live with them. Even if allowed under current pandemic guidance from CMS and MDH, unnecessary in-person visitation is strongly discouraged during the executive order timeframe, and all visits should be conducted virtually whenever possible.

MDH strongly recommends against families bringing residents of long-term care facilities to their homes during this time. This recommendation applies whether residents have previously been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have recently tested negative for COVID-19. While the Executive Order 20-99 prohibition on social gatherings of persons from more than one household does not apply to people in long-term care settings, it does apply to private homes and other locations outside of long-term care settings.

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the health of people living in long-term care facilities. Indirect impacts have also been extensive, with changes to social interactions within facilities and restrictions on visitation that have decreased valuable time spent with family and friends.

Each year, many families bring loved ones living in long-term care facilities into their homes to celebrate the holidays. Unfortunately, this year our fall and winter holiday seasons have aligned with significant increases in community spread of COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently reported that small family gatherings are an important factor contributing to recent increases in the spread of the virus.

Per Executive Order 20-99, prohibited social gatherings do not include gatherings among people in long-term care facilities. These facilities and settings must continue to follow applicable state and federal guidance, including guidance related to visitation.

Nursing home and assisted living visitation during the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be governed by MDH guidance, which is aligned with CDC guidance:

[COVID-19 Guidance: Nursing Home Visitation and Activity Restriction Modifications \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/nhvisit.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/nhvisit.pdf>)

[MN Home Care Provider/Assisted Living Visitation and Activity guidance \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/lcvisitsum.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/lcvisitsum.pdf>)

In addition, MDH has established guidance for window visits and outdoor visitation.

The CDC currently recommends that all individuals who leave a long-term care facility for non-medically necessary appointments be placed in quarantine for 14 days upon return. Please see CDC guidance for Nursing Homes: [Preparing for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>).

Residents who have prolonged close contact with persons outside of the facility should be considered for testing upon their return. Please see [COVID-19 Testing Recommendations for Long-term Care Facilities \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/lcctestrec.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/lcctestrec.pdf>) for recommendations on proactive testing of high-risk residents.



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