

Visitation in Long Term Care Facilities

Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) recognizes the difficult challenges long term care facilities, residents, family members, and caregivers have faced during the COVID-19 response. Effective February 28, 2021, there will no longer be any state mandates or state-specific guidance regarding long term care visitation. Certified Medicare and Medicaid skilled nursing facilities and nursing homes should continue to follow the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Visitation Guidance found in [QSO 20-39-NH REVISED \(updated by CMS March 10, 2021\)](#).

State licensed facilities (assisted care living facilities, residential homes for the aged, and any nursing home not certified by CMS) should reference [CMS Visitation Guidance](#) as best practice and review applicable statutes related to visitation when developing facility-specific visitation policies and procedures. The CMS guidance outlines how facilities may explore communal dining and group activities (i.e. games, beautician services, group gatherings, etc.) provided that standard infection control policies are practiced. Even as vaccination rates increase and case counts decline, facilities should maintain vigilance in monitoring for COVID-19 cases in residents and staff, through appropriate screening and testing. Resources regarding infection control practices are also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The following resources are available for facilities when updating and developing their own visitation policies and procedures:

CMS Visitation Guidance (QSO 20-39-NH) and FAQs:

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-visitation-nursing-home-residents.pdf>

CDC Infection Control Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

County Positivity Data Resource

To inform visitation and operation policies in applicable facilities, CMS posts county positivity data at the link below.

<https://data.cms.gov/stories/s/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Data/bkwz-xpvg>

A guide for how to access the data is below.

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/datasets/Instructions-for-Accessing-CMS-County-Positivity-Data.pdf>