

July 10, 2020

Dear Family member,

The last few weekly letters had very little to offer with regard to directives from the State Health Department but this week is different.

Our latest directives dated July 10 and received today are very encouraging. I am happy to announce that Nursing Homes in Phase 3 are now allowed to begin limited visitation as soon as certain criteria are met. The State Health Dept. states it this way, "Nursing Homes in Phase 3 regions may resume limited visitation and activities beginning five (5) days after the release of this health advisory and only under the following conditions."

The conditions set forth by the Health Dept. are specific and very detailed.

- The region in which the NH is located is in Phase 3.
- The NH is in full compliance with all state and federal requirements,
- The NH has protocols to separate residents into cohorts of positive, negative, and unknown
- The NH has completed the NY Forward Safety Plan and submitted a copy of the completed plan to covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov. The plan must clearly articulate the space(s) to be used for visitation (outdoors and indoors) including the number of visitors and residents which could be safely socially distanced within the space(s).
- The NH has no staffing shortages as evidenced by the NH's individual staffing plan and as reported by the NH through submissions to the National Health Safety Network (NHSN).
- The absence of any new onset of COVID-19 among staff or residents as reported to the Department on the HERDS and staff testing surveys and as reported to the NHSN for a period of no less than twenty-eight (28) days, consistent with CMS established thresholds.
- A copy of the NH's formal visitation plan is posted to their public website and broadcasted via email or social media to provide visitors with clear guidelines for visiting and to announce if and when visitation is paused due to an increase in the number of residents and/or staff with a confirmed positive COVID-19 diagnosis.
- When a NH meets all of the above criteria, the nursing home may resume visitation following the guidelines outlined above which must also be included in the NH's NY Forward Safety Plan.
- Visitation should be limited to outdoor areas, weather permitting. Under certain limited circumstances, as defined by the facility.
- At this time, visitation is strictly prohibited in resident rooms or care areas.

As you can see from the above directives, we have quite a bit of work to accomplish before we can begin to contact you with specific dates allowing visits. I know you will be patient as we work diligently to put the above rules into effect. We will keep you posted regarding our progress and provide the details necessary to allow safe and organized visits. I know everyone will welcome this good news with excitement and understand the need to allow time to meet all the requirements before we can begin limited visits.

Sincerely,

Sr. Gertrude Mary lsp

