DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop 00-00-00
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850

On March 10, 2021, CMS released revised guidance for nursing home visitation during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. See CMS memorandum QSO-20-39-NH revised, Nursing Home Visitation-COVID-19

We are encouraged by the recent continuing decline of COVID-19 cases across the country, and by the availability of vaccines which have enabled us to expand visitation in nursing homes. This is a great step in bringing residents closer together with their families. Continuing to take precautions to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, however, remains vitally important. At this time, not all nursing home residents and staff are fully vaccinated making it possible for them to still become infected by visitors. In addition, the CDC and public health experts are evaluating if individuals can spread COVID-19, including new variants, even if they are vaccinated. Therefore, the CDC still recommends maintaining the practices that reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as wearing a mask, washing your hands, and maintaining 6 feet of physical distance from others. We also understand the toll that separation and lack of physical contact has taken on residents, and our revised visitation guidance now states that if a resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting facemask.

We will continue to look for ways to bring residents and their loved ones closer together and will update our guidance to reflect the latest COVID-19 recommendations as we have done throughout the public health emergency.