



INDOOR VISITATION ALLOWED AT ALL TIMES IN NURSING HOMES: NATIONAL CMS & CDC GUIDANCE UPDATE*

CMS/CDC National Guidance

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), issued new guidance for nursing homes to expand visitation on March 10, 2021 (updated November 12, 2021). This guidance “supersedes and replaces previously issued guidance and recommendations regarding visitation.”

Federal Requirements

“Facilities must allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents.” Furthermore, “facilities can no longer limit the frequency and length of visits for residents, the number of visitors, or require advance scheduling of visits.”

No Limiting Scenarios

“**There are no longer scenarios related to COVID-19 where visitation should be limited**, except for certain situations where the visit is limited to being conducted in the resident’s room or the rare event that visitation is limited to compassionate care.” **Therefore,**

- **A nursing home must facilitate in-person visitation consistent with the applicable CMS regulations**
- Failure to facilitate visitation would constitute a potential violation and “the facility would be subject to citation and enforcement actions.”

Compassionate Care Visits

“**Compassionate care visits are allowed at all times.**” “In the event a scenario arises that would limit visitation for a resident (e.g., a resident is severely immunocompromised and the number of visitors the resident is exposed to needs to be kept to a minimum), compassionate care visits would still be allowed at all times.”

IF COVID-19 Outbreak

In the event of an outbreak investigation is initiated (defined as one new case of COVID-19 among residents or staff), the facility should adhere to CMS regulations and guidance for COVID-19 testing.

While it is safer for visitors not to enter the facility during an outbreak investigation, **visitors must still be allowed in the facility.**

- Visitors should be made aware of the potential risk of visiting during an outbreak investigation and adhere to the core principles of infection prevention.
- If residents or their representative would like to have a visit during an outbreak investigation, they should wear face coverings or masks during visits, regardless of vaccination status, and visits should ideally occur in the resident’s rooms.

*CMS QSO-20-39-NH Memo available here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>