



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

October 31, 2022
AMENDED November 3, 2022

ALTSA: NH #2022-061
CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID RELEASED QSO-20-39-NH REVISED,
UPDATING GUIDANCE FOR NURSING HOME VISITATION

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

On September 17, 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released QSO-20-39-NH, which provided guidance for visitation in nursing homes during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE).

On September 23, 2022, CMS released [QSO-20-39-NH Revised](#), with updated guidance for face coverings and masks during visits. In addition, CMS removed vaccination status from the guidance. The following information was updated and effective immediately:

Visitors With a Positive COVID-19 Test:

Nursing homes should provide guidance (e.g., posted signs at entrances) about recommended actions for visitors who have a positive viral test for COVID-19. Visitors with confirmed COVID-19 infections or COVID-19 symptoms should defer non-urgent in-person visitation until they meet CDC criteria for healthcare settings to end isolation.

Visitors Exposed To Someone With COVID-19:

It is safest to defer non-urgent in-person visitation until 10 days after the close contact if they meet criteria described in CDC healthcare guidance (e.g., cannot wear source control).

Indoor Visitation

- During peak times of visitation and large gatherings, nursing homes should encourage physical distancing.
- If the nursing home's county COVID-19 [community transmission](#) is **high**, everyone in a healthcare setting should wear face coverings or masks.
- If the nursing home's county transmission is **not high**, the safest practice is for residents and visitors to wear face coverings or masks. The facility could choose not to require visitors to wear face coverings or masks while in the facility, except during an outbreak.
- The nursing home's policies regarding face coverings and masks should be based on recommendations from the CDC, local health jurisdiction (LHJ), and individual facility circumstances.
- Regardless of the community transmission level, residents and their visitors, when alone in the resident's room or designated area, may choose not to wear face coverings or masks with close contact (including touch). Residents or their representatives and visitors should be advised of the risks of physical contact prior to the visit. If a roommate is present during the visit, it is safest for the visitor to wear a face covering or mask.

Indoor Visitation During an Outbreak Investigation

- An outbreak investigation is initiated during a single new case of COVID-19 among residents or staff to determine if others have been exposed.
- Refer to [QSO-20-38-NH Revised](#) and [CDC guidelines](#) for testing requirements.
- While an outbreak investigation is occurring, nursing homes should limit visitor movement in the facility.

ALTSA Provider Letter: **CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES RELEASED QSO-20-39-NH REVISED, UPDATING GUIDANCE FOR NURSING HOME VISITATION**

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- Visitors should physically distance themselves from other residents and staff when possible.

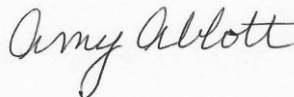
Communal Activities, Dining and Resident Outings

- The safest approach is for everyone, particularly those at high risk for severe illness, to wear a face covering or mask while in communal areas of the facility.
- Should a resident choose to leave the facility on an outing, the nursing home should remind the resident and any individual accompanying the resident to follow recommended infection prevention practices, such as wearing a face covering or mask, especially for those at high risk for severe illness and when community transmission is high.
- If it is reported that a resident was in close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the community, refer to CDC [guidance](#).
- If a resident develops signs or symptoms of COVID-19 after the outing, see CDC [guidance](#) for residents with symptoms of COVID-19.
- In most circumstances, quarantine is not recommended for residents who leave the facility for less than 24 hours (e.g., medical appointments, community outings), except in certain circumstances described in CDC's [empiric transmission-based precautions](#) guidance.
- Residents who leave the facility for greater than 24 hours should be managed as a new admission as recommended by the CDC.

Please note that Washington state mandates may be more stringent than federal guidance. Facilities are required to follow the stricter guidance. Masks are currently required for workers in long-term care settings, hospitals, medical facilities, and other health care settings in patient care and housing areas where patient contact occurs.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Molly McClintock, Nursing Home Policy Program Manager, at (360) 742-6966 or molly.mcclintock@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"