

COVID-19 UPDATE

8-21-2020

Dear Residents and Family Members:

Recently, we informed you of the NYS Department of Health (DOH) guidance to nursing homes regarding requirements that must be met before visitation to any facility can be resumed. One of those requirements is that a facility be free of any positive cases of COVID-19 among residents and/or staff. Any positive results will delay the resumption of visitation by 28 days from the date of identification of the new case.

We have since received several concerns from family members who were very disappointed when our planned date to resume visitation was delayed because of one or two positive staff results. Some of those family members requested that we advocate for them by requesting that visitation be permitted in outdoor areas, utilizing physically distanced barriers, and with both visitors and their loved ones donning masks. We heard your requests and concerns and contacted the NYS DOH, requesting Lutheran Care Center be approved for such outdoor visitation.

On 8/18/20 the NYS DOH responded to our request on your behalf, and it was denied. We do not meet the stringent requirement of no COVID positive cases for 28 consecutive days. As the regulation stands, we cannot resume visitation at our facility at this point.

Several family members also questioned why other facilities are allowing “outdoor” visitation but Lutheran Care Center is not. There may be a number of reasons why select facilities have resumed visitation. First and foremost, those facilities may have had **NO** COVID positive cases in their particular facility for 28 days, so they met the eligibility requirements for visitation under the DOH guidelines. Secondly, the facilities you see in pictures or read about in the media may not be located in the State of New York, or they may not be licensed as “nursing homes.” No regulated nursing home in New York State may resume visitation unless they are able to meet the “COVID-free” requirement.

LCC monitors CDC guidance and NYS DOH directives very closely for any updates. We are hopeful that NYS will review this onerous requirement and revise it to allow nursing home visitation to resume in a shorter period than the current 28 days.

Delivering this extremely disappointing news each week is so difficult because I realize how much our families are missing their loved ones. Unfortunately, the decision is out of our hands and in the hands of our Regulators. In the meantime, we will do our best to help you stay “**virtually**” connected to the residents. Any changes or updates to visitation will be posted on this website as soon we become aware.

I am relieved to share that there were no “COVID positive” results this week for residents or staff. In our last update, we reported on several residents with non-Covid related respiratory issues—those folks are showing improving daily! All our units have reopened, so window and FaceTime visits can be scheduled by contacting **Sharon in Recreation at Ext. 231 or 845-235-8231**. Carolyn is on vacation this week and will return on Monday, 8/31.

In addition to our virtual visits, we are doing everything possible to keep our residents engaged and to provide celebratory activities for them. Along with their routine responsibilities, all our staff is doing double duty to be even more upbeat and to offer the smiling faces and therapeutic touch that our residents need and desire. While I know you are all looking forward to taking this responsibility back, please join me in thanking our LCC healthcare heroes for ensuring “we’ve got this!”

Lastly, several family members have contacted me to request that their email addresses remain private and not be shared with other LCC family members. Please support our families and respect this request. If you have any questions or concerns, please forward them me and/or our Director of Nursing, Nurse Managers, or our Social Workers.

Effective mask wearing, handwashing, and physical distancing have proven to slow COVID-19. Unfortunately, many people prefer to believe this virus doesn’t exist. Please, let’s all continue to do our part so nursing home visitation in New York can resume soon.

Stay well and be safe!

Patricia Ludington, RN
Administrator