

<b>NORTHERN MANHATTAN REHABILITATION &amp; NURSING CENTER</b>			
Section: <b>Administrative</b>		Policy#	
Issue Date: 07/15/2020	Revision Date: 02/23/2021; 03/26/2021	Review Date: 03/26/2021	Prepared by: Administration
Policy Subject: <b>Pandemic Emergency Plan – Visitation Guidelines During a Pandemic.</b>			
Approved by: Administration, Medical Director, Director of Nursing, Infection Prevention, QAA Committee			

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of Northern Manhattan Rehabilitation and Nursing Center to promote and support visitation for residents, families and resident representatives while ensuring safety and adherence to infection prevention strategies to minimize any potential spread of infection. This will be done in accordance with all State and Federal guidance for the prevention of COVID-19.

## **PURPOSE**

To enhance resident quality of life by implementing visitation and activities to combat psychological impacts of isolation from family and representatives.

## **NYSDOH CRITERIA (revised 3 25 21)**

Northern Manhattan may conduct limited visitation and activities under the following revised NYSDOH guidelines.

The facility is in full compliance with all state and federal requirements, state Executive Orders and guidance, state reporting requirements including COVID-19 focus surveys, HERDS and staff testing surveys, and federally required submission of COVID-19 data to the NHSN.

1. The facility has protocols to separate residents into cohorts of positive, negative, and unknown as well as separate staff teams to deal with COVID-positive residents and nonpositive residents.
2. The facility has completed the NY Forward Safety Plan and submitted a copy of the complete plan to [covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov](mailto:covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov). The facility must retain a copy of the plan at the facility where it is accessible and immediately available upon request of the Department or local health department.
  - a. 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)
3. Adherence to written screening protocols for all staff during each shift, each resident daily, and all persons entering the facility or grounds of the facility, including visitors. Visitors may be asked for ID as needed. Visitors are encouraged to be tested within 2-3 days of visiting.
4. The facility will conduct screening of all who enter the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including temperature checks, questions about and observations of signs or symptoms. This includes denial of entry for those with signs/symptoms or close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the past 14 days.

In addition to screening questions, the visitor will agree that they will report any positive COVID-19 test or symptoms that occur 48 hours after a visit. Exposures will follow Contact Tracing guidelines. This will include initiating Contact Tracing upon notification from a visitor that he/she tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 by a diagnostic test, and/or developed symptoms associated with COVID-19 during the forty-eight hours following visitation. The facility will use the following guidelines to determine the potential for exposure:

- a. The visit was supervised by a staff member and all IC principles were followed, including the use of face mask/face covering, 6 feet physical distancing between the resident/visitor and all other residents/visitors.
- b. The visit was conducted in a common area or outdoor area that does not require the visitor to enter a resident unit.

All posted Policies and Procedures are current as of September 17, 2020 and are based on the current knowledge of COVID-19, CDC and NYS DOH guidelines, regulations, and NY Executive Orders as they exist. The Policies and Procedures are subject to amendment in accordance with any change to regulations, guidance, and/or executive orders.

5. If all IC principles were not met in an exposure, the facility will initiate outbreak response including Transmission-Based Precautions on affected unit(s) or entire facility as necessary. Serial testing for all staff and residents every 3-7 days until there are no positives in 14 days.
6. Documentation of screening will be maintained in an electronic format and available upon request of the NYSDOH.
7. Monitoring symptomatic residents must include daily symptom checks, vital signs, and pulse oximetry.
8. A copy of the facility'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 regulatory reasons associated with COVID-19 infection.

## **PROCEDURE**

- The facility will expand visitation and/or activities while following NYSDOH and Federal guidance.
- Facility visitation can be conducted through a variety of means:
  - a. In resident rooms
  - b. Dedicated visitation spaces
  - c. Outdoors (preferred, weather permitting)
- In order to limit movement in the facility during visitation, the following guidelines will be followed:
  - a. When weather permits, visitation will take place in the designated outdoor area(s). The outdoor patio area can accommodate up to three (3) visiting stations.
  - b. When weather does not permit, visitation will take place in the designated monitored indoor area(s). The Recreation Room located on the Main floor can accommodate up to five (5) visiting stations.
  - c. In instances when the resident cannot leave his/her room due to medical/psychosocial reasons, visitation may take place in the resident's room.
    - Visitor(s) will be escorted to the resident's room or designated area.
    - If a resident shares a room, visitation will not be conducted in the resident's room (arrangement will be made for designated room/area)

Visits will be made in advance and scheduled online via the facility's website or by Therapeutic Recreation, Social Services, Nursing and/or Administration representatives via phone. Visits allow for no more than two visitors in the visiting station. Visits will be limited to 45-minutes.

## **INDOOR VISITATION**

Facilities should **allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents** (regardless of vaccination status), **except for** a few circumstances when visitation should be limited due to a high risk of COVID-19 transmission. An exception for compassionate care visits should be permitted at all times. These scenarios include limiting indoor visitation for:

- **Unvaccinated residents if the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is >10% AND less than 70% of residents are vaccinated.**
- **Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions or**
- **Residents in quarantine, whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met criteria for release from quarantine.**

**Indoor visitation can still occur when there is an outbreak, but there is evidence that transmission is contained to a single area /unit. The facility will initiate serial testing and resume visiting based on the following:**

- a. If the first round of outbreak testing reveals no additional COVID-19 cases in other areas (e.g., units) of the facility, then visitation can resume for residents in areas/units with no COVID-19 cases. However, the facility should suspend visitation on the affected unit until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing. Example - if the first round of outbreak testing reveals two more COVID-19 cases in the same unit as the original case, but not in other units, visitation can resume for residents in areas/units with no COVID-19 cases.
- b. If the first round of outbreak testing reveals one or more additional COVID-19 cases in other areas/units of the facility (e.g., new cases in two or more units), then facilities should suspend visitation for all residents (vaccinated and unvaccinated), until the facility meets the criteria to discontinue outbreak testing in accordance with CMS guidance 42CFR 483.80(h) of testing all residents and staff every 3-7 days until there are no new positives for 14 days.

**\* Note: The facility will follow all NYS Executive Orders that are in effect, including 202.88 which presently requires staff testing twice weekly. This Executive Order is set to expire on 4/20/21.**

- The facility will assign staff to assist with the transition of residents, monitoring of visitation, and cleaning and disinfecting areas used for visitation after each visit using an EPA-approved N-List disinfectant.
- The facility will post signage regarding facemask utilization and hand hygiene and uses applicable floor markings for social distancing.
- A log will be kept for all visitors that includes:
  - First and last name of the visitor;
  - Physical (street) address of the visitor;
  - Daytime and evening telephone number;
  - Date and time of visit;
  - Email address, if available;
- Visitors and residents must wear a facemask or face covering (must always cover both the nose and mouth when on the premises of the facility). Masks will be available on hand for visitors as needed.
- Visiting areas will have easily accessible Alcohol-Based Hand Rub for residents, visitors, and staff.
- Visitors who are younger than 18 years old must be accompanied by an adult 18 years of age or older.
- The facility will allow the number of visitors based on the ability to adhere to IC principles, including the ability to maintain 6 feet physical distancing between all residents and all visitors.
- Facility staff will ensure residents /visitors do not interact with other residents and their visitors
- The facility will provide times allocated for each visit session to ensure all residents/loved ones can be accommodated with scheduling.
- Current COVID-19 positive residents, residents with COVID-19 signs or symptoms, and residents in a 14-day quarantine or observation period are not eligible for visits.
- The facility will provide and post a fact sheet outlining visitor expectations including appropriate hand hygiene and face coverings. The fact sheet will be provided upon initial screening to all visitors.
- Facilities should limit movement in the facility.
  - a. i.e., Visitors should not walk around throughout the facility. Instead, they should go directly to the area dedicated to visitation or the resident's room. If a resident shares a room, visitation should not be conducted in the resident's room. For situations where there is a roommate and health status of the resident prevents them from leaving the room, facilities should try to facilitate in-room visitation while following principles of COVID-19 infection prevention.
- Residents will also be assisted to go outdoors with staff supervision weather permitting. The appropriate infection control and safety and social distancing requirements must be maintained.
- The IDT Team will review the Visiting Program and monitor for any needed adjustments and report to QA Committee as needed.
- If any visitor fails to adhere to the protocol, he/she/they will be prohibited from visiting.

### **COMPASSIONATE CARE VISITS**

Compassionate Care Visits are permitted when visitation may not otherwise be permitted (in accordance with NYSDOH current visitation guidance), and facilities may waive requirement of a visitor presenting a negative COVID-19 test prior to commencement of such visit. Companionate care situations may be considered by the facility on a resident-specific basis. Testing to be encouraged / facilitated wherever possible.

### **END OF LIFE VISITS**

For any resident assessed to potentially be at the end-of-life, family/resident representative will be contacted by Social Worker/Designee to allow visitation. Testing is not required for end-of-life visits. Family will be screened, provided with PPE and escorted to resident's room.

## **COMMUNAL DINING AND ACTIVITIES**

The facility will facilitate communal dining while adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention including hand hygiene, masks when not eating and physical distancing.

- Residents may eat in the same room with physical distancing (e.g., limited number of people at each table and with at least six feet between each person). The facility space will be marked for 6 feet distancing and allow for the number of staff who will assist during the meal(s).

The facility will facilitate group activities including Bingo, Clubs, Music, and craft groups:

- For residents who have fully recovered from COVID-19, and for those not in isolation for observation, or with suspected or confirmed COVID19 status with social distancing among residents, appropriate hand hygiene, and use of a face covering (except while eating).
- For residents on Transmission Based Precautions designated Activities staff will provide 1:1 activities based on individual resident's needs.