

March 1, 2021

Dear Long Term Care Providers:

Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) recognizes the difficult challenges long term care facilities, residents, family members, and caregivers have faced during the COVID-19 response. Effective February 28, 2021, there will no longer be any state mandates or state-specific guidance regarding long term care visitation. Certified Medicare and Medicaid skilled nursing facilities and nursing homes should continue to follow the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Visitation Guidance found in QSO 20-39-NH.

State licensed facilities (assisted care living facilities, residential homes for the aged, and any nursing home not certified by CMS) should reference CMS Visitation Guidance as best practice and review applicable statutes related to visitation when developing facility-specific visitation policies and procedures. The CMS guidance outlines how facilities may explore communal dining and group activities (i.e. games, beautician services, group gatherings, etc.) provided that standard infection control policies are practiced. Even as vaccination rates increase and case counts decline, facilities should maintain vigilance in monitoring for COVID-19 cases in residents and staff, through appropriate screening and testing. Resources regarding infection control practices are also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

An overview of visitation has been prepared which provides links to the CMS Visitation Guidance and CDC Resources. We encourage you to share this with residents, staff, family members and caregivers as you develop your visitation policies and procedures.

Thank you for your commitment to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans.

Sincerely,



Brent Culberson
Assistant Commissioner, Health Licensure and Regulation