

# Meadows at Brookmeade

## Policy and Procedure COVID-19 Visitation Policy

Department: Nursing

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Approval: 

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### **STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

It is the policy of Brookmeade Community to adhere to applicable guidance issued by New York State in consideration of the health, welfare and significant risk posed to our residents by COVID-19. This policy included adherence to the guidance regarding visitation for nursing homes and assisted living facilities by New York State, including *Health Advisory: Nursing Home Staff and Visitation Requirement; January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

The information contained in this directive supersedes and replaces previously issued guidance and recommendations regarding general nursing home (NH) visitation and aligns with CMS and CDC guidelines on such topic. Nothing in this directive should be construed as limiting or eliminating a nursing home's (NH's) responsibility to ensure that resident and family communication is ongoing and supported by virtual visits, whenever possible, nor does it change the guidance previously issued relative to visitation for medically necessary or end-of life services.

Based on the needs of residents and a facility's structure, visitation can be conducted through a variety of means, such as in resident rooms, dedicated visitation spaces and outdoors weather permitting. Regardless of how visits are conducted, there are certain core principles and best practices that reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and must be followed.

### **Procedures:**

- Visitors who have a positive viral test for COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or currently meet the criteria for quarantine, should not enter the facility. Visitors will be screened for these exclusions.
- Hand hygiene must be performed before and after visitation and between contact with residents (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred)
- Instructional signage throughout the facility and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable facility practices (e.g., use of face covering or mask, specified entries, exits and routes to designated areas, hand hygiene)
- Wear a well-fitting non-surgical paper mask or a mask of higher quality (i.e., surgical mask, KN95 or N95) at all times during any visitation at the facility. If the visitor wishes, a cloth mask may be placed over the paper mask. The masks

- must cover both the nose and the mouth and physical distancing
- Cleaning and disinfecting high frequency touched surfaces in the facility often, and designated visitation areas after each visit
  - Appropriate staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Effective cohorting of residents (e.g., separate areas dedicated to COVID-19 care)
  - Resident and staff testing conducted as required at 42 CFR § 483.80(h)

These core principles are consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for nursing homes, and should be **adhered to at all times**. Additionally, visitation will be person-centered, consider the residents' physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being, and support their quality of life. The risk of transmission can be further reduced through the use of physical barriers (e.g., clear Plexiglass dividers, curtains). Visitors who are unable to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention will not be permitted to visit.

### **Visitor Testing**

In addition, all nursing homes licensed and regulated by the New York State Department of Health must verify that visitors have received a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result one day prior to visitation for antigen tests and two days prior to visitation for NAAT (e.g. PCR) tests. All visitors may use either NAAT testing or antigen testing.

If a visitor does not have proof of a Rapid Antigen test or PCR test Meadows at Brookmeade will provide the visitor with a test to self-administer, visitors will not test themselves in the vestibule. The visitor will show Meadows at Brookmeade staff the SARS-CoV-2 test results prior to visiting with a resident. Once a visitor has completed their test they will show proof to the staff at the facility. The facility will maintain records of visitors per the regulations from DOH.

### **Outdoor Visitation**

While taking a person-centered approach and adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, outdoor visitation is preferred when the resident and/or visitor are *not* fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

### **Indoor Visitation**

Meadows will allow indoor visitations for all residents as permitted under the regulations.

Meadows ensures that physical distancing can still be maintained during peak times of visitation (e.g., lunch time, after business hours, etc.). To maintain social distancing, a maximum of 2 visitors will be allowed in a resident's room per visit.

If a resident's roommate is unvaccinated or immunocompromised (regardless of vaccination status), visits should not be conducted in the resident's room, if possible.

If the county COVID-19 community level of transmission is substantial to high, all residents and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, should wear face coverings or masks and physically distance, at all times. In areas of low to moderate transmission, the safest practice is for residents and visitors to wear face coverings or masks and physically distance, particularly if either of them is at increased risk for severe disease or are unvaccinated. If the resident and all their visitor(s) are fully vaccinated and the resident is not moderately or severely immunocompromised, they may choose not to wear face coverings or masks and to have physical contact. Visitors should wear face coverings or masks when around other residents or healthcare personnel, regardless of vaccination status.

### **Indoor Visitation during an Outbreak Investigation**

An outbreak investigation is initiated when a new nursing home onset of COVID-19 occurs (i.e., a new COVID-19 case among residents or staff). To swiftly detect cases, Meadows adheres to CMS regulations and guidance for COVID-19 testing, including routine *unvaccinated* staff testing, testing of individuals with symptoms, and outbreak testing.

When a new case of COVID-19 among residents or staff is identified, Meadows will immediately begin outbreak testing *in accordance with CMS OSO 20-38-NH REVISED and CDC guidelines*.

While it is safer for visitors not to enter the facility during an outbreak investigation, visitors will still be allowed into Meadows. Visitors will 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 room.

### **Compassionate Care Visits**

Compassionate care visits are allowed at all times. Compassionate care visits should include:

- Newly admitted residents with difficulty adjusting to the facility environment and lack of in-person family support.
- Residents recently grieving the loss of a friend or loved one.
- Residents who previously received in-person support and/or cueing from family for eating and drinking and are now experiencing dehydration and/or weight loss.
- Residents who are exhibiting signs and symptoms of emotional distress including, but not limited to, seldom speaking or crying more frequently (when the resident had rarely cried in the past), refusing to participate in an activity or activities, staying in bed longer than usual, or exhibiting behavior considered abnormal for the individual.
- Residents who receive religious or spiritual support from clergy or another layperson