

November 16, 2021

IMPORTANT UPDATE

Residents & families of Garvey Manor & Our Lady of the Alleghenies

The Department of Health and Human Services (CMS) has issued new guidance related to visiting in long term care facilities. (CMS bulletin QSO-20-39-NH revised 11/12/21) There are important elements that you should be aware of and that must be followed as we move forward.

PLEASE READ THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION IN THIS UPDATE

- **THE PRIMARY CONSIDERATION** is safety and protection from the risk of introducing Covid into the facility and the risk of residents acquiring Covid.
- **Visitors must be aware of their own risk when in the facility.** Currently we are conducting an **Outbreak Investigation**. Three persons tested positive early this week. (An outbreak is defined by CMS as one positive case among residents or staff). Outbreak precautions are required for up to 14 days to ensure no other positive cases are identified among staff or residents. At this time only a few residents are under ‘quarantine precautions’. All units are considered Greens Zones.
- Because our **County transmission rate is HIGH, we are under special precautions.** Visitors must wear masks at all times, regardless of vaccine status. Visitors must physically distance from staff and other residents they may encounter when in the building. Visitors should be aware of their own potential exposure to the virus when in the community and not visit if they may have been exposed or have any symptom that can be Covid.
- Signage in our building gives the important information about symptoms of Covid and infection prevention steps that must be taken.
- **The CORE PRINCIPLES of infection prevention MUST be followed by all visitors:**
 - SCREENING visitors is required. Anyone who has a current positive COVID test, Covid symptoms or currently meets criteria for quarantine cannot visit. (If you flag on a criteria question when screening in on the Kiosk, you will be called by the Infection Control Director, Laura Bankert or her designee.)
 - HAND HYGIENE is essential upon entering building and entering resident room
 - FACE MASK required at all times covering nose and mouth
 - PHYSICAL DISTANCING required – at least 6 feet between people. *** OUR Nursing Home resident’s rooms allow space for only two visitors. (OLAR rooms may vary)**
 - **VISITS ARE TO BE IN THE RESIDENT’S ROOM ONLY – with door closed.** Visitors may not be in congregate areas with other residents (Family/Dining Rooms, Corridors, Chapel, Café) **If special circumstance required alternate visiting space will be assigned**

If visitors cannot adhere to the above, they can be asked to leave and not visit.

(CMS bulletin QSO-20-39-NH revised 11/12/21)

- In person visits are permitted at any time. Scheduling in person visits is no longer required. Frequency and length of visits are not limited. Number of visitors must allow for adherence to the Core Principles noted above relating to physical distancing requirements.
- Scheduling is still required for virtual visits using the same scheduling system now in use.
- Visits must occur in a manner that does not place other residents at risk. Visitors are to go directly to the designated visiting area without circulating through halls, stopping to talk to others or congregate in any way in common areas.
- Residents may also choose to have physical touch, visitor may touch resident (hug, hold hand). Resident and visitor should be aware of the potential risks of physical contact.
- If a resident leaves the building for an outing with family, residents and family are reminded to follow recommended infection prevention practices: wear face mask, physical distance and frequent hand hygiene for resident and family member(s). Always mask when around unvaccinated individuals. Residents may be screened upon return to assess potential Covid risk to self or others as a result of the outing.
- During this time, we cannot accommodate groups, or several visitors in a congregate setting with a resident. This means we cannot accommodate families coming with meals to be shared with a resident.
- We strongly encourage all visitors to be vaccinated. Vaccines are widely available in the community. This is the best precaution against the virus and safest for our residents.
- We encourage visitors to be tested on their own within 2-3 days of coming to the facility to visit. (CMS bulletin QSO-20-39-NH revised 11/12/21) This is for personal assurance of being Covid free. Testing sites are widely available in the community and rapid tests are available over the counter.

I know this is a lot of data, but all of it is important so that while we are able to relax the ability of residents to have visitors and participate in outings, we are still taking the necessary precautions to decrease the risk of exposure and the potential of introducing an outbreak of Covid into our facility and among our residents.

As we approach Thanksgiving I wish you many blessings. Despite all the concerns that we have because of the current world-wide situations relating to Covid, the shortage of workers, and shortages caused by the supply chain, we know we are very blessed in many ways that others are not. We should thank God for all our blessings.

God bless you and yours with peace, health and happiness. Happy Thanksgiving

Sister Joachim Anne, Administrator