



November 15, 2021

Dear Lorien Residents and Families,

After I sent out my letter last week regarding Thanksgiving visitation, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued updated nursing home guidance stating **visitation is now allowed for all residents and all times.**

According to CMS, “the guidance update reflects that, while visitors, residents, or their representatives should be made aware of the risks associated with visiting loved ones, visitation should now be allowed for all residents at all times. CMS has consistently updated its visitation guidance through the COVID-19 PHE, and this update represents our most comprehensive action to bring residents and loved ones closer together.”

Although this new guidance is currently in place, I'd like to also point out that transmission rates continue to rise in some of Lorien's counties. Therefore, regardless of how visits are conducted, **we must still prioritize core principles and best practices to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Each visitor will still be screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entry and be asked to use proper hand hygiene and physical distancing while in the buildings.**

Additionally, with this new guidance we expect a high volume of visitors, possibly arriving during the same time periods, as compared to this time last year. With this in mind, we ask for your continued patience and cooperation upon checking-in to any of our facilities. We also ask that you go **directly** to the visitation area or to the resident's room to avoid any unnecessary interaction throughout the building. This will help us contact trace thoroughly and quickly.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and CMS' guidance, you will be asked to wear a mask during visitation based on the transmission rates in the county in which your building is located:

- **Low to Moderate Transmission Rate: Mask is recommended for visitors**
- **Substantial to High Transmission Rate: All visitors should wear a mask**

In compliance with the new guidance, Lorien has initiated an updated visitation policy which I'll summarize in the key points below:

- Outdoor visitation is still preferred when the resident and/or visitor are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Outdoor visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. For outdoor visits, we have created accessible and safe outdoor spaces for visitation, such as in our courtyards, patios, or parking lots, including the use of tents, if available.
- In regards to indoor visitation, we will no longer limit the frequency and length of visits for residents, the number of visitors, or require advance scheduling of visits. Although we have not

Lorien Health Services
3300 North Ridge Road, Suite 390 | Ellicott City, MD 21043
Tel: (410) 750-7500 | Fax: (410) 750-7902 | TTY: (800) 735-2258
www.lorienhealth.com

placed a limit on the number of visitors that a resident can have at one time, visits should be conducted in a manner that adheres to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and does not increase risk to other residents. Since there are also no visitation time requirements, we hope that you will keep the resident's best interest in mind when considering the length and time of your visit.

- If a resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with their visitor. Unvaccinated residents may also choose to have physical touch based on their preferences and needs, such as with support persons for individuals with disabilities and visitors participating in certain religious practices, including in end-of-life situations.
- While it is safer for visitors not to enter the facility during an outbreak investigation, visitors will now be allowed in the facility. Visitors will be made aware of the potential risk of visiting during an outbreak investigation and must adhere to the core principles of infection prevention.
- Residents are also permitted to leave the facility as they choose while following all recommended infection prevention practices including wearing a mask, physical distancing, and hand hygiene. Upon the resident's return to the building, we will screen for symptoms of COVID-19. If a resident or family member reports close contact to an individual with COVID-19 while outside of the nursing home, we will test the resident for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, and we will place the resident on quarantine if the resident has not been fully vaccinated. We will also monitor residents for symptoms of COVID-19 daily. Residents who leave the facility for 24 hours or longer may be managed as a new admission or readmission, as recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

You can read the updated guidance in its entirety here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

We appreciate your patience and support as we diligently work to implement these positive adjustments safely in our buildings. We have much to be grateful this Thanksgiving and we look forward to welcoming our families in a less restricted capacity.

Sincerely,



Lou Grimmel