



<b>NATHANIEL WITHERELL</b>	<b>POLICY # 03.18.2021</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION, NURSING</b>	<b>SUBJECT: VISITATION POLICY</b>

**BACKGROUND:**

We're optimistic about the news we've been hearing on several different fronts. As of this writing, most of our residents have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and we continue to make strides in vaccinating our staff. New [federal data](#) now show that the number of new COVID-19 cases in nursing homes has dropped dramatically since December 2020, when vaccinations of older adults first began.

While this news signals a much-hoped return to normal, it's important for us all to remember how we got here in the first place. It was our careful and constant vigilance in following recommended health protocols that helped prevent COVID-19 from spreading.

This data is encouraging and uplifting. It reinforces that the COVID-19 plan we initiated and continue to follow, works. It also underscores the importance of getting vaccinated. In light of this positive downward trend for COVID-19 in nursing homes, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare has issued [revised guidelines](#) for in-person visitation.

While many are eager to return to indoor visitation, the purpose of this policy is to clarify what the new guidelines mean, how they'll be implemented and to avoid any confusion. After 12 months of virtual and outdoor visits, allowing in-person, indoor visits again, is our immediate goal. But in order to keep everyone safe, we'll need to proceed as directed.

**POLICY:**

In order to ensure rewarding and safe visits. All TNW Visitors, Residents and Staff will follow the protocols outlined in this Visitation Policy and Procedure. **This includes mask wearing at all times, hand hygiene and infection control protocols per DPH, CMS, and Ombudsman guidelines.**

**PURPOSE:**

To safely allow in-person visits at TNW by following CMS, CTDPH and CDC guidance. Note: this policy and procedure is a living document and will be updated as guidance and protocols continue to change.



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**PROCEDURE:**

**Outdoor visitation is still preferred.** As the vaccine offers important disease protection, it does not completely eliminate risk. So, for our older adults and frail seniors, caution is still paramount.

- Due to logistical considerations, the facility cannot ensure that all rooms will be cleaned immediately after visits, which is why we strongly encourage visits take place in common areas and outdoors.
- Visitors will continue to undergo a pre-visit health screening prior to entering the facility.
- We will open our doors for [in-person visitation](#) for residents and their families on a limited basis.
- For scheduling purposes, and to help ensure all residents are able to receive visitors; 45-minute visits will occur in the following areas to allow for increased spacing and airflow. Auditorium, Solarium, Library, etc. (Areas determined by administration and subject to change).
- The duration of in-room visits will be discretionary, based on resident preferences and care needs.
- Indoor visitation requests need to be arranged in advance.
- Vaccinated residents can opt to have physical contact with their family members during a visit if all are masked and hand hygiene is practiced before and after the visit.
- **Please contact the Nurse Supervisor number at 203-618-4328 or call 203-618-4200 and ask for the Nurse Supervisor, if you have questions about details and/or scheduling.** We appreciate visitors understanding that while they have greater access to their loved ones, we also need to adhere to the guideline of managing the number of visitors based on the size of the facility and the physical space, thus the need for organization and scheduling first.

*“Facilities should limit the number of visitors per resident at one time and limit the total number of visitors in the facility at one time (based on the size of the building and physical space). Facilities should consider scheduling visits for a specified length of time to help ensure all residents are able to receive visitors.”*

*SUBJECT: Nursing Home Visitation - COVID-19 (REVISED), pg. 3.*



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**Procedure for ALL TYPES OF VISITS:**

Visitors should arrive at least 5 minutes prior to their scheduled appointment and ring the doorbell at the main entrance or call the receptionist at **203-618-4200** and answer a brief health screening.

Visitors MUST have their temperatures checked and recorded in a log book by front desk staff, along with the date, time and resident they are visiting.

All visitors are asked to use the hand sanitizer provided before making their visit. (If a visitor has a temperature equal to or above 100.4° F, their visit must be rescheduled).

If for any reason, a visitor objects to completing any part of the screening, the receptionist will notify the Nursing Supervisor and a pause will be placed on the visit as it is now considered unsafe. Visitors may go directly to the resident’s unit to bring the resident outside. Residents leaving the unit must be signed out by the visitor on the clipboard at the nursing station.

**Per the CTDPH Building Fire Safety Division Inspector**, there will be a staff member assigned during outdoor visits in case of any emergencies. This staff member will be designated to call for inside resources/support in case of any emergencies. Visitors can also contact the front desk at 203-618-4200 for further assistance.

When returning your loved one to their unit, please use the doorbell located on the left side of the double doors at the front entrance of the building. The resident must be signed back in on the clipboard at the nursing station by the visitor.

Visits continue to be scheduled via Signup Genius, Therapeutic Recreation and Nursing.

If a family member needs further assistance while outside, please contact the front desk at **203-618-4200** and after stating your issue, the appropriate person will attend to your need(s).

Note: All pods have disinfecting wipes, gloves, hand sanitizers, and trash receptacles. All PODS will be disinfected fully at the end of each day by Housekeeping.

All horizontal and frequently touched surfaces of the POD container, which includes table(s) and chairs, will be sanitized and disinfected, with a hospital grade disinfectant, between each visit.



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During disinfection, all the windows of the office container will be left completely opened to increase air flow.

At the end of each day, all vertical and horizontal surfaces will be wiped down, and the entire container will be sprayed with a cordless electrostatic backpack sprayer containing a hospital grade disinfectant.

Per page three of the new CMS guidelines under indoor visitation:

- Facilities should limit the number of visitors per resident at one time and limit the total number of visitors in the facility at one time (based on the size of the building and physical space). Based on CMS guidance, no more than 2 visitors will be permitted in a resident room during in-room visits.
- Facilities should consider scheduling visits for a specified length of time to help ensure all residents are able to receive visitors. TNW encourages visitors to call ahead of time before visiting and proper accommodations can be made for your visits.
- Facilities should limit movement in the facility. For example, visitors should not walk around different halls of the facility. Rather, they should go directly to the resident’s room or designated visitation area. Visits for residents who share a room should not be conducted in the resident’s room, with the exception of bed-bound residents.
- Residents in private rooms may receive visitors at any time, unless that resident is COVID-19 positive or during an outbreak.
- If a resident has an unvaccinated roommate and the roommate will not leave his/her room, no visitors are permitted in that room.
- Vaccinated residents can opt to have physical contact with their family members during a visit if all are masked and hand hygiene is practiced before and after the visit.

### **Outbreak Testing**

Please note that indoor visitation will be paused if any resident or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 during weekly testing. Indoor visits can be reinstated once the facility has completed one full round of **outbreak testing** with no new positive cases.

It is important to note that TNW’s Lab Partner and designated testing days (**every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday**), were chosen for us by CMS and the CTDPH, and we need to capture



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the weekend staff. Consequently, the average time it takes to do one round of outbreak testing is 7 days.

To schedule a ***visit outside during outbreak testing***, please contact your loved one’s nursing floor to arrange that visit:

- 1<sup>st</sup> floor - 203-618-4225
- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor - 203-618-4220
- 3<sup>rd</sup> floor - 203-618-4221
- 4<sup>th</sup> floor - 203-618-4222
- ML Rehab - 203-618-4249
- GL Rehab - 203-413-6819

For all loved ones planning to visit residents; you can visit at any time, but we encourage you to visit between 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 2:00-4:00 p.m. This allows us to prepare our residents for your visit and best serve and care for them during mealtime service and change of shift.

If possible, when visiting on the weekend, please try to arrange with nursing by Friday to ensure the best plan for the weekend. If you cannot do this and are unable to reach the nursing floor on the weekend, please contact the front desk at **203-618-4200**.

The receptionist will put you in touch with the Nursing Supervisor. Before and after hours, the automated phone system will give you an option to contact the Nursing Supervisor.

**Leaves of Absence (LOAs)**

- Social distancing and infection control measures must be followed during LOAs for the safety of residents and family members.
- Risk assessments may be conducted if it is determined that the resident was at high risk for exposure during his/her LOA. This could result in a resident being placed in observation.
- To ensure the safety of residents, visitors and staff, it is important that family members be forthcoming with information of resident’s exposure while on LOA. TNW encourages that



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residents are isolated as much as possible and limited interaction with individuals who are not vaccinated.

**Gifts/Packages:**

Small, personal items i.e. flowers, can be brought into the facility. Larger items i.e. clothing will still need to be dropped off outside for delivery to units.

**Vaccination Status and HIPAA**

**Note:** At no time should a visitor ask staff or another resident, their vaccination status or share anyone's vaccination status. This is a HIPPA violation.