



NATHANIEL WITHERELL	POLICY # 03.18.2021
DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION, NURSING	SUBJECT: VISITATION POLICY

BACKGROUND:

As of this writing, majority of our residents have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. >98% of our staff is fully vaccinated; with the additional <2% with approved exemption per State and Federal guidelines. New [federal data](#) now show that the number of new COVID-19 cases in nursing homes dropped dramatically since December 2020, when vaccinations of older adults first began. Though, due to increase virus variants infection has started to rise again. A booster dose of the vaccine is now recommended to minimize infection and illness severity.

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 is our priority just after ensuring resident’s safety.

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.** TNW will continue to facilitate and assist Residents and family to visit and remain connected through safe means and measures.



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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.

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.

In-door/In-room Visits

Visits are allowed on the unit in your resident’s room once consent is given by their roommate or roommates Responsible Party. If you are unable to visit in the room you may take your resident off the unit and into one of our designated visit areas (auditorium, library, etc) on the lobby level; or outdoors. Both you and your resident **MUST** wear a face mask covering nose and mouth completely at all times during the visit. If you do not want to go up to the unit to get your resident, then you may ‘call’ the unit and ask for a staff to assist with the transport of your resident to one of the designated visit area. Placing the call prior to your arrival is best, so as to lessen your wait time. Prior to the end of your visit call the unit to have someone assist with the transport of the resident back to the unit; or you may transport your resident back to the unit.

- 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.
- Designated visiting 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 and outdoor visitation requests need to be arranged in advance as much as possible, however not required.
- 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.



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- **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 visitation details.** 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 must allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents as permitted under the regulations. While previously acceptable during the PHE, facilities can no longer limit the frequency and length of visits for residents, the number of visitors, or require advance scheduling of visits. Although there is no 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. Facilities should ensure that physical distancing can still be maintained during peak times of visitation (e.g., lunch time, after business hours, etc.). Also, facilities should avoid large gatherings (e.g., parties, events) where large numbers of visitors are in the same space at the same time and physical distancing cannot be maintained.”

SUBJECT: Nursing Home Visitation - COVID-19 (REVISED), pg. 4.

Procedure for ALL TYPES OF VISITS:

Appointments are no longer required for any indoor or outdoor visits. Prior notification to the unit is encouraged so as to lessen wait time by having your resident prepared for your visit.

PRIOR TO ENTERING THE FACILITY, MASK WEARING (OVER MOUTH AND NOSE) IS MANDATORY!

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.

If you are anyone you’ve been in contact within the last 14 days has Covid or exhibits symptoms, please do not schedule a visit and DO NOT enter the facility (indoor or outdoor).

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.



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Visitors can also contact the front desk at 203-618-4200 for assistance in the event of an emergency while visiting outdoors.

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.

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. 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.

Outbreak Testing

Please note that indoor visitation is no longer restricted if any resident or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 during weekly testing. Indoor visits continues as we conduct **outbreak testing**.

During outbreak testing all residents and staff are tested on varying days 1x-2x per week. Due to increase Covid positivity rates, results may be delayed. Consequently, the average time it takes to do one round of outbreak testing is 7 days.

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

- 1st floor - 203-618-4225
- 2nd floor - 203-618-4220
- 3rd floor - 203-618-4221
- 4th floor - 203-618-4222
- ML Rehab - 203-618-4249



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

LOAs are 'discouraged' (no restricted) at the moment due to increase risk and positivity rates.

The Team here at TNW understands that Residents and their loved ones would like to keep traditions alive this holiday season. We encourage Residents and their visitors to limit visitation and contact with unvaccinated loved ones as much as possible/tolerable. We encourage all TNW family and visitors to become vaccinated as we all work together to keep your loved ones and our Residents safe. Refrain from visiting if you or someone you have been in contact with is unwell. Please notify the unit immediately if become unwell or test positive after visiting with your Resident. **MASK WEARING IS MANDATORY FOR ALL VISITORS!**

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 HIPAA violation. *TNW does not require visitor vaccination or the disclosure of such information; however, we do strongly recommend it.*



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Resources

For more information, please visit:-

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html#:~:text=Residents%20with%20suspected%20or%20confirmed,\)%2C%20gloves%2C%20and%20gown.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html#:~:text=Residents%20with%20suspected%20or%20confirmed,)%2C%20gloves%2C%20and%20gown.)