

St. Mary's Center for Rehabilitation and Healthcare Policy and Procedure for Essential Caregiver Visitation

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for conducting Essential Caregiver visitation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pertinent Definitions

COVID Signs and Symptoms: Fever; chills; cough; shortness of breath/difficulty breathing; sore throat; fatigue; headache; new loss of taste or smell; congestion/ runny nose; nausea/vomiting; diarrhea; muscle/body aches

Essential Care Giver: An individual, (i.e., family member, outside caregiver, friend) who:

1. Was previously (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) actively engaged with a resident/patient
2. Is committed to providing assistance with activities of daily living and other care needs

Phase 0: Any facility with an active COVID 19 Outbreak or any facility that cannot - or has yet to - attest to the criteria required to advance stages as per this facility's Reopening Policy.

Phase 1: Facilities that never had an outbreak or that concluded an outbreak and:

- a. 14 days have passed since New Jersey moved to Stage 1 (May 2, 2020)
- b. The facility has submitted all the attestations required

Phase 2: Facilities that never had an outbreak or that concluded an outbreak and:

- a. 14 days have passed since New Jersey moved to Stage 2 (June 15, 2020)
- b. The facility has submitted all the attestations required

Phase 3: Facilities that never had an outbreak or that concluded an outbreak and:

- a. 14 days have passed since New Jersey moved to Stage 3 (DATE TBD)
- b. The facility has submitted all the attestations required

Policy

This facility recognizes the critical role family members and other outside caregivers often have in the care of our residents. As a result, pursuant to the New Jersey Department of Health Executive Directive No. 20-026 date August 10, 2020, approved Essential Caregivers will be permitted to enter the facility and provide assistance with activities of daily living and other care needs.

Procedure:

1. An individual can request to apply to be an Essential Caregiver or can be asked by the facility if they would like to apply based on their known history of providing essential caregiving services
 - a. No one can be approved to be an Essential Caregiver without having submitted an application
2. Prior to receiving an essential caregiving visit, each eligible resident/patient (or representative when applicable) will be consulted about their wishes in order to determine whom they wish to designate as the Essential Caregiver
 - a. This individual must have provided regular care to the resident (i.e. a wife who regularly came in to feed her husband)
3. Residents/patients will be permitted to designate more than one Essential Caregiver based on their past involvement and needs (i.e., more than one family member previously split time to provide care for the resident)
 - a. In these situations, facility staff will work cooperatively with the resident/patient and caregiver to work out a schedule to accommodate the Essential Caregivers
 - i. Each resident/patient can have no more than two Essential Caregivers providing care at one time
4. Resident/patients will **NOT** be eligible for essential caregiving services if they:
 - a. Are in a 14-day quarantine period
 - b. Are positive for COVID-19 and have not met the criteria for the discontinuation of isolation or symptomatic
 - c. Are symptomatic with COVID-19 signs and symptoms
5. Once the Administrator, DON, ADON, and/or Director of Social Services have approved an application, a day and time for the visit(s) will be scheduled:
 - a. While in Phase 0 one visit per week for up to two hours is permitted
 - b. While in Phases 1 and 2, two visits per week not to exceed a total of four hours per week are permitted
 - c. Once in Phase 3, this facility will allow visitation under the procedures outlined in this facility's Reopening Policy and Procedure
 - d. This facility will ensure that scheduling of Essential Caregiver visits takes into account the number of Essential Caregivers in the building at the same time (this facility maintains the right to establish time limits as needed to keep residents safe)
6. On the scheduled day and time, before being permitted to enter the facility:
 - a. Using the NJ Department of Health guidelines, each visitor will be screened for COVID-19 signs and symptoms - or any infectious communicable disease - and have their temperature taken; only visitors who pass the screening - and do not have any of the following will be permitted entry:
 - i. An elevated temperature
 - ii. In the last 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID
 - iii. In the last 14 days has had contact with someone under investigation for COVID
 - iv. In the last 14 days has had contact with someone with a respiratory illness.
 - v. A diagnosis of COVID 19 without clearance for the discontinuation of isolation

Regardless of what responses the Essential Caregiver provides on the written screening, anyone who is unable to demonstrate the proper use of infection prevention and control techniques and/or is showing signs of respiratory illness (coughs, shortness of breath, runny nose, sneezing) will not be permitted to enter the facility.

7. Once approved for entry, the Essential Caregiver must wear a facemask (the facility may require visitors to use additional forms of personal protective equipment (PPE), as determined necessary); instruction will be provided on:
 - a. Hand hygiene and the location of handwashing stations
 - b. Limiting touching surfaces
 - c. Use of PPE
 - d. Cough etiquette
 - e. Restricting physical contact with anyone other than the resident/patient to be visited
 - f. Monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for at least 14 days after exiting the facility, and that if symptoms occur to:
 - i. Self-isolate at home
 - ii. Contact their healthcare provider
 - iii. Immediately notify the facility of the date they were in the facility, the individuals they were in contact with, and the locations within the facility they visited.
 1. The facility will immediately screen the individual of reported contact and take on all necessary actions based on any finding
 - g. Movement within the facility is to be limited to the resident's room or designated space
 - i. Each Essential Caregiver will be escorted to the room/designated space by a facility representative

Any violation of the guidelines above will result in immediate removal from the facility

8. Once the visitation is over:
 - a. PPE will be disposed of following established procedures
 - b. Hand hygiene will be required
 - c. A facility rep will escort the Essential Caregiver to the exit where he/she will check out