

DHS Advises Facilities to Address Visitation Policies During COVID-19 Outbreak

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) issued [updated guidance for long-term care and assisted living facilities regarding COVID-19](#) visitation policies. Facilities should consider a few key items when updating their visitation policies and procedures:

- Facilities should restrict visitation by all visitors and non-essential health care personnel, except for certain compassionate care situations (such as an end-of-life situation). In those situations, facilities should limit those visitors to a specific room (ideally near the entrance), require them to practice good hand hygiene, social distancing and to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) if appropriate. Facilities and families can reach out to the State of Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care for assistance in determining appropriate exceptions to the general restriction. Facilities should offer alternative means of communications between family members and residents such as cell phone or internet-based devices. Facilities should also keep the lines of communication open with family members via possible Listserv, central call-in line or something similar.
- Facilities should not allow any visitor to enter the facility, regardless of the situation, if the individual has symptoms of a respiratory infection or a fever.
- Facilities should review and revise as necessary all interactions with vendors, delivery drivers, agency staff, EMS and transportation providers.

Governor Evers is [anticipated to issue a "Safer-at-Home" order](#) to go into effect this week. Following the issuance of the order, facilities should contact their vendors, delivery drivers, and transportation providers to determine whether they will remain open as essential businesses.

DHS also issued updated guidance for facilities regarding [increased screenings of respiratory illness for residents and health care workers](#).

Please contact a member of Reinhart's [Health Care Practice](#) with any questions you may have.

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