



Ascension Living

March 15, 2020

Dear Ascension Living Residents and Family Members,

I promised to provide you with regular updates in my last letter. As you can imagine, we are adjusting quickly to the spread of COVID-19 and making necessary changes to meet new guidelines defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

On Friday, CMS issued new guidance to nursing homes to improve their infection control and prevention practices to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, including revised guidance for visitation and group activities within skilled nursing facilities (nursing homes) that I wanted to make you aware of.

The health and safety of our residents, associates and visitors is our top priority at Ascension Living. As we consider how best to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we are listening to medical guidance and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that our senior population is most at risk to have a negative outcome if they contract COVID-19. As of today, we have no confirmed COVID-19 cases in our ministry. **Right now we are focusing on prevention.**

We understand this change will represent a significant hardship for both residents and families. We also understand that connecting with loved ones is incredibly important. Our team is prepared to think creatively in order to assist in connecting families in any way we can - telephone, email, text message, video chat or social media.

Visitation Changes

Due to the new CMS guidance, **all Ascension Living skilled nursing facilities will restrict all visitors and non-essential health care personnel, except for certain compassionate care situations, such as an end-of-life situation.** In those cases, visitors will be limited to a specific room only. Visitors allowed in for these important visits will also need to meet the following CMS essential visitor requirements:

- Visitors must enter through the main Entrance and be screened at the front desk.
- Visitors that exhibit signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection (fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat) may not visit and should follow up with their personal healthcare provider.
- Visitors who have a cough, a fever or trouble breathing and have traveled in the past 14 days, may not visit and should report their symptoms to their personal healthcare provider.
- Visitors who, in the last 14 days, have had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or under investigation for COVID-19, or are ill with respiratory illness may not visit

- and as appropriate should follow up with their personal healthcare provider.
- Visitors who are returning from international travel within the last 14 days to countries with sustained community transmission (China, Europe, Iran, Italy, Japan, South Korea) or international cruise, may not visit.
 - Anyone entering the building will need to wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel and frequently wash their hands while in the building.
 - Visitors must wear a face mask.
 - Only two visitors are allowed per resident at one time. The Illinois Department of Public Health only allows one visitor per resident per day.
 - Visits from children are at the discretion of Administration. Illinois Department of Public Health will not allow visitors under 18 years of age.

We continue to have virtual visitation available for you and your loved one through electronics. Please contact the Executive Director to coordinate. In the event there is a special need to drop off or pick up essential items, we have implemented a process for exchange at the entrance of the community. Please call the community to coordinate.

Dining and Group Activities

Due to the new CMS regulations, we are required to cancel all communal dining and group activities. As a result, our community leaders are building customized plans to provide dining service to all residents in their rooms. Each unique nutritional need will continue to be met during this unprecedented period.

Resources:

- Updated CMS regulation: www.cms.gov/files/document/3-13-2020-nursing-home-guidance-covid-19.pdf
- CDC updates: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>

We appreciate your understanding and support during this time of uncertainty. Rest assured that we are dedicated to providing compassionate care, support and personalized service during this pandemic and everyday. Today and always - we are ready to help and serve! Our teams are busy planning ways to keep our residents feeling connected, happy and well. Thank you, and may God continue to bless you, your families and our Ascension Living family.

Regards,



Danny Stricker, President, Ascension Living