



Department
of Health

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Amy Acton, M.D., MPH, Director

April 3, 2020

Dear Ohio Long-Term Care Facility Administrators,

This is revised guidance related to the March 13, 2020, Amended Order of Director of Health Dr. Amy Acton that was sent out through EIDC. The Order limits access to nursing homes to those personnel who are absolutely necessary for the operation of the home, including staff, contracted and emergency healthcare providers, contractors conducting critical on-site maintenance, and governmental representatives and regulators and their contractors. Long-term care facilities should screen these personnel in accordance with guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Ohio Department of Health.

After screening, necessary personnel should be permitted to enter the building if they do not meet the criteria for exclusion under the guidance. This includes contracted healthcare providers like hospice workers who may need to provide care to a resident multiple times daily. It is important that the healthcare needs of your residents continue to be met during this critical time.

While the amended order restricts normal visitation to residents, it makes an exception for end-of life situations. Visitation would be limited to any resident who is facing imminent death as determined by a medical professional acting within their scope of practice. The facility should screen visitors prior to entry and restrict any visitor who does not pass screening. There are additional recommendations for visitors in the most recent CMS guidance.

I recommend that residential care facilities look to the CMS guidance to help develop best practices also. The guidance can be found on the CMS website at <https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurveycertificationgeninfo/policy-and-guidance-infection-control-and-prevention-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-nursing-homes-revised>.

As previously stated, survey staff will expect to be screened prior to admission to nursing homes and residential care facilities. The Department continues to monitor the health of our staff. If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please contact the Ohio Department of Health's Bureau of Survey and Certification at (614) 752-9524.

Sincerely,

Rebecca E. Sandholdt
Chief, Bureau of Survey & Certification