

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Nursing Homes and in Hospice

Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention

Issued by CMS March 9, 2020

On March 9, CMS issued guidance for infection and control and prevention of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) for both [nursing homes](#) and [hospices](#). This quick guide will address CMS revised guidance on visitation, which allows hospice workers to be allowed entry into nursing homes.

From CMS Nursing Facility Guidance: *"Facilities can allow entry of these visitors as long as they are following the appropriate CDC guidelines for Transmission-Based Precautions. For example, hospice workers can enter a facility when using PPE properly."*

Revised Guidance for Visitation for Nursing Homes (from [CMS Guidance QSO-20-14-nh-revised](#))

From CMS Hospice Guidance: *"If hospice care is provided in a nursing home, we have advised nursing homes that hospice workers should be allowed entry provided that hospice staff is following the appropriate CDC guidelines for Transmission-Based Precautions, and using PPE properly."*

Revised Guidance for Hospices (from [CMS Guidance QSO-20-16 - Hospice](#))

HOW SHOULD NURSING FACILITIES MONITOR OR RESTRICT VISITORS?

Facilities should actively screen and restrict visitation by those who meet the following criteria:

1. Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat.
2. In the last 14 days, has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or under investigation for COVID-19, or are ill with respiratory illness.
3. International travel within the last 14 days to countries with sustained community transmission. For updated information on affected countries visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html
4. Residing in a community where community-based spread of COVID-19 is occurring.

For those individuals that do not meet the above criteria, facilities can allow entry but may require visitors to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as facemasks (see expanded guidance below).

Recommendation in CMS Guidance for Nursing Homes for Hospice Workers:

Facilities should review and revise how they interact with volunteers, vendors and receiving supplies, agency staff, EMS personnel and equipment, transportation providers (e.g., when taking residents to offsite appointments, etc.), other practitioners (e.g., hospice workers, specialists, physical therapy, etc.), and take necessary actions to prevent any potential transmission. For example, do not have supply vendors transport supplies inside the facility. Have them dropped off at a dedicated location (e.g., loading dock). Facilities can allow entry of these visitors as long as they are following the appropriate CDC guidelines for Transmission-Based Precautions. For example, hospice workers can enter a facility when using PPE properly.

Questions regarding this CMS memo should be addressed to QSOG_EmergencyPrep@cms.hhs.gov. Questions about COVID-19 guidance/screening criteria should be addressed to the State Epidemiologist or other responsible state or local public health officials in your state.