

March 23, 2020

Dear Providers:

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is committed to protecting the public's health and preventing further spread of COVID-19. As part of the efforts to combat the spread of this virus, Governor Polis issued [Public Health Order 20-20](#) on March 12, 2020. This Order directed skilled nursing facilities, assisted living residences, and intermediate care facilities to restrict visitation of non-essential individuals and revise policies, practices, and procedures to implement necessary actions and best practices to prevent potential disease transmission. The Order clarifies that "facilities shall review 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.), and other practitioners (e.g., hospice workers, specialists, physical therapy, etc.)."

As the Order indicates, facilities should restrict all non-essential visitors at this time. However, home health agencies and hospice workers operating under physician's orders, may be considered essential visitors. Decisions about visitation for home health and hospice workers should be made on a case by case basis, in consultation with the resident's physician, to determine who is essential and non-essential. Additionally, consideration should be given to visitors under certain compassionate care situations, such as end-of-life, and visitors who support the physical and/or mental well-being of the resident.

Visitors entering under compassionate care situations or as vendors providing services should be screened the same as all other essential visitors, in accordance with the Order. Such visitors may be limited to a specific room only. Those with symptoms of a respiratory infection (fever, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat) should not be permitted to enter the facility at any time (even in end-of-life situations).

Facilities are expected to notify potential visitors of the restriction on visitation until further notice (through signage, calls, letters, etc.). Those visitors that are permitted after screening must perform hand hygiene and use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as facemasks, and restrict their visit to the resident's room or other location designated by the facility.

Sincerely,

D. Randy Kuykendall, MLS  
Director, Health Facilities & EMS Division

