



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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*Office of Aging and People with Disabilities*  
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## **AFH Provider Alert**

Date: October 13, 2021

To: All Adult Foster Home  
Providers

From: Jack Honey, Administrator  
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Office of Aging and People with Disabilities



## **RE: Updated COVID-19 policy guidance**

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### **Background**

Tens of thousands of vaccinations have been administered to long term care (LTC) staff and residents in Oregon. These vaccines have been shown to help prevent symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection (i.e., COVID-19) and, in turn, decrease case counts in LTC settings. Therefore, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is updating its visitation guidance and other COVID-19 policies accordingly.

All of the policy changes are intended to be measured as we move to bring our Adult Foster Home (AFH) communities back to “normal”. The importance of maintaining infection prevention practices, given the continued risk of COVID-19 transmission and variants, must still be the top priority each day. These policies will likely change again as we continue to learn more from our federal and state partners on vaccinations and other COVID related practices in a world with vaccines.

This alert provides updated guidance and reminders on COVID-19 policies for the following areas:

- Reporting COVID-19 cases and suspected cases
- Executive Orders
- Core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention
- Indoor visitation

## **Reporting COVID-19 cases and suspected cases**

It is imperative that AFH staff continue to diligently monitor and report any suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases within the AFH. Even after the AFH has completed vaccination clinics, the reporting process must be followed.

As a reminder, if a resident or employee in your AFH is suspected of or has tested positive for COVID-19, the AFH Licensee (or Designee) must take the following steps immediately:

- Notify the resident's health care provider when a resident exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.
- Notify your local licensing office of the suspected or confirmed exposure.
- Notify the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA) for your county.

If one of your residents or employees has tested positive, the LPHA will begin a contact tracing investigation and ensure appropriate safeguards are taken. Additionally, the LPHA will want to have current information as to the vaccination status of your staff, residents, and the individual(s) with positive test results.

If an individual tests positive fourteen (14) or more days after the last vaccination dose is administered (2nd dose of Pfizer/ Moderna or 1st dose for Johnson & Johnson Janssen vaccine), licensees should flag these cases for the LPHA as these situations meet the definition for "breakthrough" infections. These breakthrough infections in long-term care are being tracked by LPHAs, in collaboration with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## **Executive Orders**

Even after an AFH has completed vaccination clinics, the Department will issue Executive Orders (EO) to AFHs having suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 among residents and/or staff. As a reminder, the EO is not a disciplinary action and is not reflected in a provider's compliance history. The EO outlines the additional requirements, or limitations SOQ may place on an AFH when there is a positive, or suspected case to minimize risk of additional infections.

Requirements, or limitations, may include modified visitation, restriction of new admissions, and other infection control enhancements. Each individual situation will be evaluated for risk and appropriate modifications may be made to keep residents safe while minimizing disruption.

## **Core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention**

As Licensees establish policies in accordance with this guidance, it is essential that infection control practices continue to be carefully observed. The following core principles and best practices help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission:

- Screening of all who enter the AFH for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. temperature checks, questions about and observations of signs or symptoms), and denial of entry of those with signs or symptoms or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days (regardless of the visitor's vaccination status).
- Hand hygiene (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred).
- Social distancing of at least six feet between persons.
- Universal use of face coverings or masks (covering mouth and nose), except for those living in the AFH.
- Instructional signage throughout the AFH and proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable AFH practices (e.g. use of face coverings/masks, specified entries, exits and routes to designated areas, hand hygiene).
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and designated visitation areas after each visit in the AFH often.
- Strict compliance for use of personal protective equipment by staff.
- Effective cohorting of residents and staff if needed (e.g. separate areas dedicated to COVID-19 care).

As a reminder, vaccination status in a AFH will have no impact on requirements for PPE usage, social distancing and other infection control measures unless specifically modified in other policies.

### **Indoor visitation**

- AFH Staff must allow in-room visits, or visitation in a private visiting area if an in-room visit cannot be accommodated.
- Visitors do not need to be monitored after the visitor has been screened for COVID-19 symptoms upon entry to the AFH and if they follow infection control protocols. However, their movement within the AFH should be minimized.
- Vaccination may not be required for visitors wishing to enter the AFH.

AFH Licensees may limit indoor visitation under the following circumstances only:

- An Executive Order restricting visitation is in effect.
- Resident to be visited has a confirmed COVID-19 infection (it does not matter if they have been vaccinated) and they have not yet met the criteria to discontinue transmission-based precautions;
- Resident to be visited is in quarantine (it does not matter if they have been vaccinated);
- The visitor will not adhere to infection prevention guidance, and related protocols, after appropriate coaching and education.

To further clarify the visitation guidance:

- **Compassionate care** – As a reminder, compassionate care visits, and visits required under Federal disability rights law, must always be allowed for any resident, regardless of a resident’s vaccination status or outbreak status.
- **Vaccination** - Similarly, we encourage visitors to become vaccinated when they have the opportunity. While visitor testing and vaccination can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, visitors are not required to be vaccinated as a condition of visitation. This also applies to representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and protection and advocacy systems.
- **Personal protective equipment** - Visitors may bring their own personal PPE or PPE may be provided by the AFH. The only PPE requirement for visitors is a properly fitting face covering/mask.
- **Visitor monitoring** – AFH Staff should limit visitor movement in the AFH. Whenever possible, visitors should go directly to the resident’s room or designated visitation area. Visits for residents who share a room should not be conducted in the resident’s room, if possible. For situations where there is a roommate and the health status of the resident prevents their leaving the room, staff should attempt to enable in-room visitation while adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention.
- **Infection control** - ODHS and CDC continue to recommend long-term care settings, residents, and families adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection. This continues to be the safest way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly if either party has not been fully vaccinated.

If you have any questions about the items detailed in this provider alert, please contact the AFH Policy team at [APD.AFHteam@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:APD.AFHteam@dhsosha.state.or.us)