



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

Safety, Oversight and Quality

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Reference: **REVISED ADMIN ALERT COVID-19 SOQ DHS**

Date: March 5, 2020 Revises Provider Alert sent 02/29/2020

To: Nursing Facility Providers, Community Based Care Providers & Adult Foster Home Providers

From: Safety, Oversight and Quality (SOQ)

Subject: **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
CLARIFICATION to Previous Communication**

Dear Long-Term Care Providers:

This alert is being resent to **clarify** recommendations related to allowing visitors in your facilities. We ask for your immediate action in helping prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) illness in Oregon long-term care facilities.

In recent days, concerns have grown in Oregon about the recent occurrences of a new strain of coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. COVID-19 is a new respiratory illness that has sickened tens of thousands of people worldwide. It is very important that we do all we can to ensure that vulnerable populations, including older adults and people with disabilities, are not exposed to the virus.

We are sending this alert to encourage you to post a notice to visitors to practice prevention when entering a long-term care facility. An example notice is attached that may be customized for your specific facility.

We have included a link to informational materials from the Oregon Health Authority to help educate the public about how to prevent the spread of flu viruses.

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASESCONDITIONS/DISEASESAZ/Pages/emerging-respiratory-infections.aspx>

DHS encourages facilities to screen visitors for the following:

1. International travel within the last 14 days to restricted countries. For updated information on restricted countries visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
2. Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a fever, cough, and sore throat.

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3. Has had contact with someone with or under investigation for COVID-19.

If visitors meet any of the above criteria, facilities may restrict their entry to the facility. Regulations and guidance related to restricting a resident's right to visitors can be found at 42 CFR §483.10(f)(4), and at F-tag 563 of Appendix PP of the State Operations Manual. Specifically, a facility may need to restrict or limit visitation rights for reasonable clinical and safety reasons. This includes, "restrictions placed to prevent community-associated infection or communicable disease transmission to the resident." A resident's risk factors for infection (e.g., immunocompromised condition) or current health state (e.g., end-of-life care) should be considered when restricting visitors. In general, visitors with signs and symptoms of a transmissible infection (e.g., a visitor is febrile and exhibiting signs and symptoms of an influenza-like illness) should defer visitation until he or she is no longer potentially infectious (e.g., 24 hours after resolution of fever without antipyretic medication).

We will not allow facilities to adopt blanket policies prohibiting visitors. The Department of Human Services appreciates the desire and efforts of facilities to keep their communities' virus free; we share those goals. However, residents do benefit from visits and a complete ban is not an action we can support.

Encouraging, but not requiring, the use of other forms of visitation such as Skype, Facetime, phone calls and offsite visits may be used successfully in some circumstances.

Case managers, guardians, ombudsman, protective services workers and licensors remain permitted to visit facilities for their regular business, so long as they are following CDC guidelines for illness prevention at all times. **This does not preclude a facility from screening potential visitors and denying visitation for those deemed a health risk for COVID-19 by the CDC guidelines.** You may also require visitors to comply with infection control practices that are reasonably adopted for your community.

Again, we ask that facilities post signage encouraging visitors with symptoms, or whom have visited impacted countries or whom have been exposed to COVID-19, not to visit. Universal precautions should remain in place and be practiced for the protection of all residents, staff and visitors.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this revision to this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

Michael McCormick
Interim Director
Aging and People with Disabilities Program
Department of Human Services

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ATTACHMENTS

For general information about the DHS Office of Safety, Oversight and Quality, visit the DHS Web site at www.oregon.gov/DHS/.

If you are a nursing facility and have questions about this alert, please contact the Nursing Facility Licensing Unit at NF.Licensing@state.or.us;

If you are a community based care facility, please contact the CBC Team at CBC.TEAM@dhsosha.state.or.us