

TO: PMMA Residents, Family Members and Visitors
PMMA Employees
PMMA Home Office and Community Personnel

FROM: Bruce H. Shogren, President/CEO

CC: PMMA Board of Trustees, PMMA Senior Leadership

RE: COVID-19 Update – **“STAY THE COURSE” – *Here Comes the Sun***

DATE: March 17, 2021

Twelve months ago, this was the opening paragraph in my March 2020 letter to residents and families:

These are very uncertain and anxiety producing times. It is understandable why with the COVID-19 virus spreading from coast-to-coast and around the world. It is a menacing and silent intruder into our lives and livelihoods. As it spreads, it is wreaking havoc on industries, businesses, schools, hospitals and people. It is affecting our economy and our health, as well as our ability to be with family, friends and co-workers during this very stressful time.

Those words were the beginning of a year in which we have had to adapt, change and trust in the direction of **“*Staying the Course.*”** As we navigated the pandemic, we sustained hope for our lives to return to pre-COVID-19 days.

That steadfastness appears to be paying off in that last Wednesday, March 9, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), in consultation with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), essentially lifted the COVID restrictions regarding limiting visitation for nursing homes. This new CMS guidance, along with the CDC’s revised new guidance loosening restrictions for the general public issued the day before, is the beginning of allowing all of us to start to get back to a *more normal* life, including family visitations for all of our residents.

This good news though needs to be taken with the same **“*Stay the Course*”** attitude we have all maintained throughout this pandemic, as we work with our local State and County health officials to revise our guidelines and policies for PMMA’s visitation rules and protocols. Attached to this letter are documents that should help our families and friends understand the visitation “rules” beginning immediately. In addition, I am attaching an attachment from CMS/CDC on *“When Can I Visit Her Nursing Home?”* that contains other helpful information on visitation and vaccinations. If you have any questions, please contact your PMMA community’s executive director.

On behalf of the PMMA Board of Trustees members and the PMMA senior leadership team, I want to extend PMMA’s deepest appreciation and gratitude to all our employees, residents, their families, donors and friends for your trust, confidence, cooperation and patience during the past year.

Let me again end with one of my favorite Bible verses paraphrased for this good news:

“We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.”
Phillippians 4:13

God’s Blessings,



Bruce H. Shogren
President/CEO

VISITATION GUIDE*

Effective
March 11, 2021

*Unless prohibited by local health department.



VISITATION TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED

Positive case on campus.

Visitation may be allowed in unaffected areas. Call for information.

Compassionate care and end of life visits continue on a case-by-case basis.



Indoor and outdoor visits allowed.

Outdoor visits preferred – weather permitting.

All visits require screening and precautions.



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Indoor Visitation Allowed

Visitors must check-in and check-out and are subject to screening and precautions.

Limit 2 visitors per residence at one time.

Compassionate Care Only

(when active COVID-19 case in Independent Living neighborhood)



SCREENING & PRECAUTIONS

Access:

- Scheduled visits only – no drop-ins
- No more than 2 visitors per resident at one time
- Strict adherence to visiting hours and capacity

Health & Hygiene Monitoring:

- Temperature check
- Signs and symptoms screening
- Handwashing/alcohol gel use required

Masking:

- Facemask or covering required and provided
- Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) including gowns and gloves as needed

Social Distancing:

- Vaccinated residents may choose close contact with hand hygiene
- Remain 6-feet apart at all times

Movement:

- Follow entry instructions
- Designated visiting areas
- Limit movements inside building

Guidelines for INDEPENDENT LIVING VISITORS

INDOOR VISITATION ALLOWED

All visits require screening and precautions.

- Limit 2 visitors per residence, no overnight stays
- Check-in and check-out required
- Masks required and provided
- Practice social distancing and good hand hygiene



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Mom's vaccinated:

WHEN CAN I VISIT HER NURSING HOME?

It is so great that your mom, dad or other loved ones have received their COVID-19 vaccine. This is an important step towards protecting their health, achieving herd immunity and returning to normal life.

Both CMS and CDC recognize the importance of visiting your relatives as part of staying healthy. You can now visit your loved ones inside when the positivity rate in your nursing home's county is less than 10%. In addition, if the positivity rate in your nursing home's county is more than 10%, and less than 70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated, then only residents who are fully vaccinated should receive visitors.

In the case of an outbreak at a facility, indoor visitation is still possible, as long as COVID-19 transmission is contained to a single area of the facility.

If your loved one is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch) with you as long as they are wearing a well-fitting face mask.

Outdoor visits are also safer when weather is good. You can check with your nursing home or local health department to find out more information on visiting your loved one. More information on CMS' visitation guidance can be found [here](#), including compassionate care visits and visitor vaccination.

We are constantly weighing the risks of spreading COVID-19 with the risks of expanding visitation. There are a few more steps before nursing homes can allow even more visitors.

Some nursing home residents and staff are not vaccinated or haven't received their second doses. **So, not everyone in a nursing home is protected from COVID-19 yet and could be infected by visitors.**

Also, **although a vaccinated person may not "feel" sick from COVID-19, they could be infected and/or spread the virus to others.** For example, if a vaccinated resident contracts the virus from a staff member or visitor, that resident will likely be protected from the disease, but could put an unvaccinated resident or staff member at serious risk.

For now, nursing home staff, patients, residents, and visitors need to **continue practicing the 3 W's: Wear a mask, Wash your hands, Watch your distance.** And, nursing homes must continue to implement all current CDC [infection control guidance](#) and adhere to CMS' regulations and guidance for [testing](#). **As vaccination increases and COVID-19 cases decrease, we look forward to more visitation and social interaction among residents, friends, family, and loved-ones.** We will continue to learn and make updates to visitation over the coming months.

So what can you do in the meantime? Get the vaccine when it's available to you. And do what you can to slow the spread of COVID-19. If you are vaccinated, then if asked, explain why you chose to be vaccinated.

The sooner we have more people vaccinated and fewer people getting sick, the sooner we can visit and hug the nursing home residents we love.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/toolkits/long-term-care/downloads/answering-residents-loved-ones-questions.pdf>