

November 19, 2021

Families, friends, residents and staff;

Last week the federal governing agency (CMS) which provides regulatory oversight of nursing homes announced a groundbreaking update since the restrictions were first put into effect due to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19; visitations are no longer required to be scheduled in advance or restricted to length of time. Restrictions were initially established as a way to reduce the spread of illness and potential deaths. At this point nearly, all residents and staff are fully vaccinated which dramatically decreases the risk of transmission; however, there is still a significant concern of outbreaks even in vaccinated individuals. The newest federal update stresses the importance of open visitation to be conducted in a manner that does not impose on the rights of another resident, including risk of contracting COVID-19. As a way to decrease the risk of spreading COVID-19, CMS has released the Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Control, it is critical and mandatory for everyone to follow these core principles so we maintain strong infection control practices:

Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention

- Visitors who have a positive test for COVID-19, have ANY symptoms of COVID-19 or currently meeting criteria for quarantine should not enter the facility.
- Great hand hygiene
- Wearing face coverings (covering mouth and nose) with social distancing from others people who are not part of the visit.
- When in Substantial risk of transmission, visitors must wear a face shield while walking to the resident's room. **Face Shields continue to be required based on Coos County's infection rate.**
- Following instructional signs regarding newest COVID-19 updates, infection control precautions and other applicable practices.
- Cleaning and disinfecting high-frequency touched surfaces.
- Visitors are not required to be vaccinated or test prior to the visit as a condition to the visit. Visitors who decline to disclose their vaccination status should wear a facemask at all times.
- Visitors are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated from COVID-19.
- Visitors must complete screening prior to entry. Visitors exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 or had exposure with a COVID-19 positive individual within the last 14 days are not permitted to visit.
- During indoor visitation, visitor movement must be limited throughout the facility. For example, visitors should not walk around different halls of the facility. Rather, they should go directly to the resident's room or designated visitation area.

This news is exciting for residents and their families/friends, but it does create an increased risk of spreading COVID-19, particularly with a significantly high level of community transmission. COOS county continues to have a significantly high number of COVID-19 cases with an infection rate of 15% of the population. To assist in decreasing the risk of transmitting illness the following continues to be prohibited:

- Large Indoor gatherings.

- Communal dining with residents (visitors may eat with a resident in the resident's room, with the resident's permission and understanding to contracting COVID-19).
- Visitors participating in group activities with residents.

The recent change come immediately before Thanksgiving and we anticipate many people will want to exercise these allowances. We stress the significance and importance of each visitor postponing their visit or resident outing if a recent exposure may have occurred or experiencing symptoms. If there are any questions, concerns or specific scenarios you would like to discuss please call or email at stv.administrator@nh-cc.org; with the holidays beginning next week, we anticipate many questions and email will be checked often.

Lastly, we continue to test twice a week and all tests for the week returned as negative!

Have a wonderful weekend,,

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