

**St. Vincent de Paul Rehabilitation and Nursing Center**

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November 26, 2021

Families, friends, residents and staff;

This week we celebrate Thanksgiving and to prevent a delay in service our weekly COVID testing was conducted a day earlier than typical. As of the drafting of this letter results have not been returned from Monday's testing.

Last week we announced the recent CMS update allowing visitation reminder and screening requirements. Visitations are no longer required to be scheduled in advance. To assist in having the resident ready, we kindly request a call is made ahead of time if a resident will be leaving the building on an outing. There continue to be many questions about the visits so we have included the updates Core Principles of Infection Control as a guide for you to be aware of the requirements that remain. To ensure strong infection control practices and to remain compliant with the regulations it is each necessary to follow each principle. Key details include: wearing a mask over nose and mouth while walking throughout the building, not associating with other residents or staff during the visit, maintain social distancing from other individuals and not visiting if an encounter with a potentially positive or COVID positive individual within the last 14 days or if any new onset of illness exists. Attached you will find the most updated version of the Core Principles of Infection Control.

On Friday, December 17 we will be hosting the resident Christmas party, with a focus on COVID-19 precautions. We will be adhering to all requirements with masks and social distancing with an emphasis on infection control. Typically, some families would enjoy this meal and experience with their loved one but unfortunately due to visitation guidance we are unable to have visitors join. We will ensure plenty of pictures are taken and posted on Facebook for families to experience this occasion.

Last year we held a door decorating contest for staff and residents. Managers decorated their doors and participating staff assisted residents with their doors. Interested families and residents are encouraged to decorate their doors between now and December 12, judging and winners will be announced on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. We would like to take this moment to remind families we have many fire safety requirements related to decorating a resident's room; extension cords are not permitted, real evergreen trees/wreaths and flower arrangements are not permitted. This includes flower arrangements delivered from local flower shops.

Although this has been an incredibly challenging year with multiple negatives we have many things to be grateful for. As a team, we are thankful for each resident, family member, friend and associate who helps take precaution and monitor their personal lives so we do not place unnecessary harm towards our residents. We are thankful for the generosity shared and understanding displayed. Thank you for making this challenging time easier to navigate.

Kindly,

*Jeffrey Lacroix* NHA, MLA, FACHCA  
Administrator

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## CATHOLIC CHARITIES NEW HAMPSHIRE VISITOR EDUCATION

We are pleased to be able to liberalize visitation at this time. The pandemic has taken its toll and everyone is craving some normalcy again. We want your visits to be meaningful and support our residents' physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being. However, as much as we all wish the pandemic was over, it is not. In fact, numbers have risen exponentially again, nursing homes are experiencing outbreaks, and community transmission remains high. Therefore, we need to implement safety measures to protect you while you are visiting, protect the residents in our care and protect our employees who have worked tirelessly throughout the course of this pandemic. The Core Principles of Infection Control must be followed at all times during your visit.

### Core Principles of Infection Control

- Please practice good hand hygiene at all times while in the nursing home. Alcohol gel will be provided as you enter the facility and there are alcohol based hand rub stations throughout the facility for your use. Please ask the staff if you are unsure where to find alcohol gel.
- A medical grade mask will be provided to you. Please make sure you wear this mask at all times during your visit, with the exceptions as noted below.
- Physical distancing of 6 feet is also strongly encouraged, with exceptions listed below.
- You will receive education and a copy of this education at the time of your visit and will be asked to sign acknowledgement that you have received education about visit expectations and infection control.
- You may also refer to signage posted throughout the facility and ask staff for clarification as necessary.
- Visits do not need to be scheduled in advance. We would appreciate calling ahead for visits after hours or at peak times such as during mealtimes, so we can ensure that there are not too many visitors in the same area for everyone's safety.
- You will be asked if you have been vaccinated. You are not required to answer this but it is helpful to us to know this information for the safety of the community. We strongly advise all our visitors to be vaccinated for the protection of all our residents, visitors and employees. If you have any questions about vaccination, or would like any additional information we would be happy to help you with this. Please ask to see our Director of Nursing, Assistant Director of Nursing or Infection Preventionist for vaccination information.
- If you decline to disclose your vaccination status we must assume you are not vaccinated and you will need to keep your mask on at all times during your visit, even when you are alone with your loved one in their room.
- We no longer require screening before scheduling a visit as the visits no longer need to be scheduled in advance. When you arrive for a visit you and your party will be screened at that time. If anyone in your party displays does not meet the screening criteria their visit will be postponed until screening criteria are met.
- If anyone in your party is not able to understand visitation guidelines or infection control measures, that person must be accompanied by someone who can ensure that infection prevention measures will be maintained, or the nursing home reserves the right to monitor the visit.
- If anyone in your party refuses to adhere to the safety and infection control measures during the visit, that person may be asked to leave and future visits may be restricted.
- You will be given a fresh medical grade mask to wear during your visit. Additional PPE will be available (gowns, gloves, eye protection) and offered based on community transmission or the presence of COVID-19 cases in the nursing home. You may also request any of these items at the time of screening
- The PPE that was provided to you must be worn and maintained throughout the entire visit
- Visits may occur in residents' rooms or in visiting areas. The appropriate area will be discussed with you at the time of your visit and will depend on the number of visitors in any area.

### **CATHOLIC CHARITIES NEW HAMPSHIRE VISITOR EDUCATION**

- We ask that you not stop to chat with any other residents or family members while you are here. Please stay in the designated area with the resident you are here to see.
- You will need to wear the mask provided to you and physically distance during your visit at all times while you are in the facility during times of substantial or high community transmission, with the following exceptions:
  1. During times of moderate or low community transmission, if you, and the resident you are visiting are both vaccinated and you both understand the risk that even vaccinated individuals can develop and transmit COVID, you may remove your mask only while you are in the private visiting area, or in a private room. If you are visiting in a public area you may not remove your mask.
  2. During times of substantial or high community transmission please keep your mask on at all times unless you and the resident you are visiting are eating a meal together in the residents' private room.
  3. If your loved one is severely immunocompromised, you may not remove your mask and must maintain physical distancing. Please check with your nurse if you are uncertain of your loved one's medical risk.
- Visiting is allowed, though not recommended, during a COVID outbreak, and/or if your loved one is on quarantine. If you are visiting a resident who is positive for COVID, or in quarantine the visit must occur in the resident room. The resident and visitors must wear medical facemasks at all times and any additional PPE you are asked to wear by the staff.