
 <p>Wyoming Department of Health</p>	<p>401 Hathaway Building • Cheyenne, WY 82002 Phone (307) 777-7656 • 1-866-571-0944 Fax (307) 777-7439 • www.health.wyo.gov</p>	
<p>Michael A. Ceballos Director</p>		<p>Mark Gordon Governor</p>

March 2, 2021

Ref.: C-2021-200

Updated Nursing and Assisted Living Facility Guidance

Background

Since December 2020, Wyoming’s COVID-19 metrics have been improving. These improvements include a continued reduction in the daily number of positive COVID-19 cases, a continued reduction in the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations statewide, a continued decline in the percent positivity rate of all COVID-19 test results, and a reduction in the number of COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care facilities.

In addition, long-term care facility residents and staff in Wyoming have begun receiving COVID-19 vaccines. Soon, many residents and some staff will be two weeks out from their second dose, meaning those individuals are considered fully immunized.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has not yet changed its visitation guidance for nursing facilities, largely due to the current limited supply of vaccines. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has not changed infection control recommendations for long-term care facilities.

However, due to the above mentioned developments, the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) has updated its COVID-19 recommendations for long-term care facilities – including nursing facilities and assisted living facilities. That guidance is provided below.

NEW Recommendations from the WDH for All Long-term Care Facilities

- As outlined below, residents of nursing facilities and assisted living facilities may leave the facility and not require a 14-day observation/quarantine period upon return. The Department recommends the following to ensure appropriate safety for all residents and staff:
 - Residents leaving the facility should follow all public health orders in Wyoming, including not attending events or gatherings that would violate provisions of the orders (number of people in attendance and capacity, mask compliance, etc.). Facilities should educate residents leaving the facility on the public health orders and encourage residents to follow the orders. Current versions of all public health

orders can be found here: <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/covid-19-orders-and-guidance/>.

- Social distancing, hygiene, and mask use should be used to the greatest extent possible while residents are outside of the facility.
- Long-term care facilities should continue to follow visitation guidelines previously issued and consistent with the CMS memorandum dated September 17, 2020 (<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh.pdf>), including:
 - Visitor screening;
 - Physical distancing;
 - Hand hygiene; and
 - Mask use.

Facilities must allow indoor, outdoor, and compassionate care visitation, but facilities may continue to restrict indoor visitation for clinical and safety reasons such as an outbreak within the facility or high community test positivity rate.

Facilities are encouraged to implement measures to facilitate visitation access in areas with low transmission levels and high rates of vaccination among residents. Strategies could include allowing more visitors per resident to the extent that physical distancing can be maintained, allowing visitation without prior scheduling, and allowing longer visits.

In assisted living facilities, brief periods of close contact (e.g., hugging) between visitors and fully vaccinated residents while masked is reasonable, though physical distancing should be maintained for the majority of the visit. A resident is considered fully vaccinated when two weeks have passed after completion of the vaccine series. Nursing facilities must continue to follow CMS visitation guidelines.

WDH Recommendations that WILL NOT Change

The Department recommends continuing with the following practices:

- Nursing facilities must continue to follow all CMS guidelines for COVID-19, including visitation guidelines and appropriate COVID-19 testing protocols.
- Per the current guidance from the CDC, long-term care facilities should continue to quarantine all residents who have had a known exposure to COVID-19.
- Per the current guidance from the CDC, long-term care facilities should continue to isolate residents with symptoms of COVID-19.

- Continue to screen all residents and staff for symptoms of respiratory illness and ensure those residents suspected of having COVID-19 are screened by a healthcare provider and tested for the virus.
- Continue enhanced infection control practices, including proper hand wash techniques, increase in the availability and accessibility of hand-washing stations and alcohol-based rubs (ABHRs), re-enforcing strong hand hygiene practices and no-touch receptacles for disposal, and requiring staff and allowed visitors to perform hand hygiene upon entering the building. Staff should also regularly clean and disinfect the facility, paying special attention to high-touch areas and surfaces. Staff should use personal protective equipment (PPE) when appropriate, following CDC, CMS, and WDH guidance.
- Communal dining and activities may occur if physical distancing of at least 6 feet between each person, with the exception of spouses or roommates, can be maintained.
- Nursing facilities should conduct testing of staff and outbreak testing of all residents and staff according to the Interim Final Rule CMS-3401-IFC, dated August 26, 2020 (<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-38-nh.pdf>). Assisted living facilities may choose to either follow the CMS testing guidance for nursing facilities or continue to test 20% of residents and staff every two weeks as recommended in previous WDH guidance.
- Follow the testing and infection control recommendations of WDH when a case of COVID-19 is detected among a resident or staff member.
- Long-term care facilities may allow students to perform clinical rotations in the facility. Students should be trained in proper PPE usage and educated on the risks of COVID-19 in the population they are serving and should wear all proper PPE for their roles and tasks while in the facility. Students should participate in staff symptom screening protocols. Students should be tested as staff members during both routine testing and outbreak testing.
- Barbering and cosmetology services may be provided to residents under the following conditions:
 - The barber or cosmetologist must be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 or exposure to an individual with COVID-19 within the last 14 days prior to providing services. Any individual with symptoms or exposure within the last 14 days must not be allowed to provide service. For guidance on COVID-19 symptom screening, please see Department of Health guidance at: https://health.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WDH-Guidance-for-Employee-Screening_COVID-19_6.15.2020.pdf (link [here](#)).
 - The residents must wear a face mask at all times while receiving service, unless medically contraindicated.

- The barber or cosmetologist must wear a face mask while providing service or while within six (6) feet of other individuals; eye protection such as a face shield or goggles is also recommended.
- Equipment and surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized between each resident.
- The barber or cosmetologist must perform hand hygiene before and after contact with each resident, and residents must perform hand hygiene prior to and after receiving services.
- Residents must maintain six (6) feet of physical distancing from other residents while receiving or awaiting services.
- The barber or cosmetologist may only be allowed in locations within the facility where they are providing services.
- Services should be performed in areas that are well-ventilated.

The WDH will continuously re-evaluate these recommendations and update guidance as necessary based on current conditions of the COVID-19 outbreak in Wyoming.

More information about COVID-19 can be found at:

- <https://health.wyo.gov/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/long-term-care.html>
- <https://www.cms.gov/>